YES!
ウサギが
呼び
ました!
問題児
異世界から
来る
たちが
そうですよ?
Tatsunokotarou
竜ノ湖太郎
illustration
天之有
角川
スニーカー
文庫

Vol 12 Mondaiji Tachi

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〝ノーネーム〟のお風呂女子会の始まりです！
春日部耀
フェイスレス
久遠飛鳥
黒ウサギ
アルマテイア

YES! 舞台裏です!

さあ、お風呂にも入ったことですし、はりきって完結巻行きましょう!

待て、黒ウサギ。俺に考えがある

私にも考えがあるわ

はわわ!皆さん、急にどうしちゃったのですか!?

私にも

お前らの「考え」とやら、この俺が聞いてやろう!

誰っ!?

突如響いた謎の声の正体は!?
いま、究極の進路相談が始まります!!

Prologue

Prologue

The shining divine spear was approaching the heart of the Three Headed Dragon. In the blink of an eye, the spear penetrated the chest and pierced the heart. There were no possible means to hit him, who was bound with the gift of "Serpent Bearer".[1]

However, there exists something that even the strongest demon lord, 「The Enemy of the World」 can't survive.

The spear thrown by Indra's follower will 「Bring Victory」 when it hits, and this was not a metaphor. It excelled in long distance fights and had a gift that brought an imminent death upon the one who is pierced.

With this, it's checkmate.

Everyone from the hosts, including the 「No Name」 were convinced of victory.

But, as if wanting to trample on their confidence, the Three Headed Dragon roared.

—Don't look down on the demon lord and on 「Absolute Evil」!!!

He then released a power befitting of a king that could even shake the sun. The restrictions of the golden dragon, bearing the mass that rivaled that of a star, were torn. But that wasn’t all.

Changing his whole body to astral, the Three Headed Dragon attempted to avoid the divine spear with speed that approached at 6th cosmic velocity.

No, he will avoid. He will definitely avoid it.

Sakamaki Izayoi believed that even by exhausting all their means, this determined demon lord would go even further. Because he said it himself at the very start of the battle:

Use all your power!

Use all your resourcefulness!

Show me your courage, and try to become a shining sword that could pierce through me!

Gift games; the entertainments of gods that tested one’s power, wisdom and courage. This was the first rule of the world he was taught when he came to little garden.

And to overcome this demon lord hailed as a 「Last Embryo」 (Last Trials of Humanity), one must become the greatest hero carrying those three swords in hand.

Strength is exhausted. Resourcefulness is exhausted. But with those alone, one sword was

still missing.

A once in a lifetime chance, made possible at the cost of piles of corpses of heroes. Izayoi believed that if they showed even more courage at this moment, then they would be able to finally defeat this demon lord.

Izayoi got on Kouryuu's back who became a moon dragon and waited just above the Three Headed Dragon in front of Kuro Usagi. On Izayoi's body were only the gifts that made physical interference. He won't die instantly no matter what kind of spear hits him, even if it was the spear of a war god.

Thus, he caught the spear of certain victory with his whole body and attacked the Three Headed Dragon with its blade.

But even if the gifts do not work on him, the sharpness of the spear won't change. There were many exclamations about the importance of using such means. But if they don't expect this much from the Three Headed Dragon, they won't be able to win.

He is the strongest demon lord. The giant peak that no one managed to overcome. And if they, as the challengers don't show courage and make the impossible possible, then they won't achieve victory.

(Come.....Divine Spear of Indra—!!!)

Prepared to give up an arm, Izayoi faced the matter.

Getting ready for his internal organs to be blown off the moment he couldn't catch the spear and mustering determination, he jumped.

A flash of light approached. Lightning traveling faster than light.

The gift capable of destroying a star, or possibly the whole Milky Way was bringing death upon Izayoi.

Futile determination. Cruelly pierced heart. Scattered blood. Field of vision dyed red from pain.

The Three Headed Dragon's ridiculing voice was heard, laughing at the foolish challenge.

Desperate screams of Kudou Asuka and Kasukabe Yo was heard.

In his consciousness that was about to fade——The facial expression of Kuro Usagi killing Izayoi was reflected at the last second.

*

And at that moment, he woke up.

(..... .... Damn Bastard.)

It's just a dream huh, - he didn’t say a cliche complaint like that.[2]

Izayoi threw off his wet shirt and turned over on the bed, preparing to get back to sleep.

---

1 Furigana on the Kanji was Asclepius.↩

2 2 夢 オチかよ、などとありきたりな悪態は吐かない。Basically it said, He did not throw a cliche complaint about the fact that it was "it was all a dream" ending. If someone has a better way to translate this, just drop it in comments.↩

Chapter 1

Part 1

「Mines of Raging Seas」- Inn of Six Scars.

Autumn rains just ended and some areas are even starting to become cold. Sounds of blacksmithing rang out constantly at a corner of the mine, this is Izayoi's living quarters.

The bedroom clock issued a constant 'KachaKacha' sound.

The ticking sound of the second hand, why does it sound so piercing. Suspicious for being unable to sleep, Izayoi turned on the other side but at that moment, Ponpopopon! – the sounds of jumping were heard.

"Morning! Wake up!"

"Izayoi, time to wake up!"

"Faster wake up!"

Wookya♪ Came a group of fairies with pointed hats bringing with them enthusiastic and cheerful sounds.

Izayoi who was awaken by the excessive noises, stuck his head out from underneath the bedsheets with an unhappy face.

"……Quiet! Ochibis."

"Ochibi?"

"Ochibi!?"

"Ochibi!!?"

"Correct.『Mini Mel series』, abbreviated as Ochibi"

Don't abbreviate it!!?

The group of 3 fairies —Melun, Melulu, Melilu exclaimed.

Melun has the spirit rank of being a living documentary of Hamelin's「Rattenfänger」, and increased her dependents due to her developing the farmlands in「No Name」.

The fairy wearing the pointy hat is, the leader of them, Melun.

The fairy wearing the hat with 2 pointed tips is Melulu.

The fairy wearing the hat with 3 pointed tips is Melilu.

It's often said that three women together are noisy[1], but three fairies popping up in front of someone's face are even noisier. Izayoi stretched his head while still half asleep, tickled the sisters, then looked at the clock to check the time. And he stared in wonder at the unexpected time.

(Seriously? It's noon already?)

What the hell – Saying so, Izayoi hurriedly got up.

This isn't the time to tickle Melun sisters. Today they were scheduled to attend a Game. Izayoi stretched his back, and silently started to get serious in preparation for the game.

—After the battle with the three headed dragon, already 3 months have passed.

After「No Name」dealt with the handling of the fallen ones' memorial service and the post-war services, they headed to the lands on the Eastern side for new activities.

That location was the「Adamantine」Mines, that were once owned by former「No Name」.

6 digit outer gate №565656 –「Mines of Raging Seas」.

He opened the window, the burning sunlight and hot air, and also the smell of metal assaulted his sense of smell.

Wind blowing down from the mountains and water flowing in the river. The fertility of the soil and the fire used for the black smithing.

The peculiar dust in the mines, adding together the ores dug up by the mining machinery to be used in the ironworks, The ringing sounds coming from the smithwork were hard to bear for Izayoi who just work up, but this also helped him become fully awake.

Izayoi inhaled deeply the sharp smell of the metal, thereby getting rid of his drowsiness. Using the smell of metal to invigorate his mind is also not bad. Just as he was fully awake and about to close the window, he heard a familiar voice.

“Izayoi-kun! What are you doing!? It’s already noon! Hurry down stairs!”

Asuka’s resonating voice reached the ears of Izayoi.

While placing his hands over his ears, Izayoi laughed softly and looked downwards towards her.

“Good morning, Ojō-sama. It’s so early in the morning and you already have so much vigour.”

“Asuka!”

“Asuka has a lot of vigour!”

“Asuka also has a lot of vigour so early in the morning!”

Calling out “Wookya♪” as they flew down from the open window, dashing straight into Asuka’s hair with an adorable sounds.

Asuka skilfully caught them, she then sighed inwardly and lifted her head to look at Izayoi.

“To be able to view a time like this as morning, seems like you have a pretty serious illness. Normally we don’t refer noon time as morning. Faster wash your face and make preparations. If you don’t manage to come in time for the preselection, then only Izayoi-san would not attend the game, eh? Or are you implying that retreating in defeat for the preliminaries is okay for you?“

Asuka glared at Izayoi from far away in anger. Defying her at such a time was not a wise decision. Izayoi won’t see the end of this if he continues this dalliance.

Izayoi waved his hand to show that he understood.

“Hai, hai. I’ll go and prepare, so wait a minute.”

And also wash my face, Izayoi closed the window while being enjoined by Asuka.

After Drinking his coffee, he then began to wash his face, followed by a shower.

Izayoi made Asuka and Melun wait for him, while finishing his preparations, and to wear on the corresponding clothes. Izayoi stood upright and unmoving, and placed his mining pick under his arm, he was wearing his architect-style clothes ordered from「Thousand Eyes」.

“Right. Then let’s go mining!”

Letting out a soft “Haha” sound, Izayoi left the small house, his temporary accommodation. The game taking place crowded up the venue, leading to the build-up of people from the commercial, industrial and mining communities.

Looking towards the common gourd-like nose of the dwarfs and the pointed ears of the elves and many more races that even the outside world is familiar with, Izayoi let out a huge sigh.

“Well……?There are even Elves and Dwarfs here. Worthy of being a game venue able to obtain rich precious metals. There are so many famous people here. Up till now, I haven’t

been able to see many eudemons, but now, in such a short while, a lot more appeared."

"Ara, it's like this?"

"It's exactly like this. Shiroyasha once said, the Northern Europe's power lies with a particular group of Gods in the「Little Garden」who are constantly losing power. I would think that now those with organisational power are few in number."

After hearing Izayoi's words, Asuka glanced around. Speaking of the Northern Europe's power, Asuka was unclear regarding it. Elves and Dwarfs, these races only became well known in Japan a period of time after the war ended. To Asuka who came from the Shōwa era, she wasn't familiar with these races.

"Even though I don't understand, but there are many issues surrounding the gods. But why did the Gods weaken? Were they attacked by Demon lords?"

"En–, There are some complicated reasons. Since the Norse Gods follow Chri—"

"Cough"

"Ai, that was rude of me. It's supposed to be: the Gods weakened due to the spread of Ch*****anity. It is said that after the faith energy was absorbed, there was a propaganda to belittle the main Norse God, and in that transient moment, he fell from the level of a God to that of a fairy."

Izayoi said, casually waving his hand, expressing his disinterest in the subject.

The decline of the Norse gods is a relatively famous story, there was a scandal that the"main Norse God Odin went from house to house saying「Believe in me!」to gain the people's' belief ".[2]

This was a type of propaganda through belittling others religion and from there increasing one's' own power, but it indeed showed an explosive result when used in advanced civilisation.

Deities, they are beings who hold honourable glory. When they reach the point where they need to implore humans to believe in them, as deities, they are finished. They won't even be regarded as objects of faith.

"Gods of Greece, Gods of Rome, Celtic Gods, Norse Gods, et cetera. These Western Gods declined during the rise of Ch*****anity, they were being constantly replaced..... if there was even a chance for them to be saved, it would be during the Renaissance revolution, which initiated the German civilians to destroy the cultural Risorgimento, since they were lodging the mystery that derived from the arts and were hence relieved.[3] Ah then, to put it simply and in a Japanese style, it would be like this. Convert the old fashioned classical arts and Kojiki[4] to modern style, then recompile it into something the general public can accept."

"Is, is it?"

To Asuka who was trying her best to understand, Izayoi used an analogy to explain. But there was no way Asuka from the Shōwa era would be able to comprehend the words said previously. Even though Izayoi knew this, he still said as much, which was unlike him.

Seems like I haven't fully woken up yet, Izayoi let out a bitter smile and raised his head.

"Now that you mention it, it's Kasukabe's preliminary round in the game. "

"Un. If Izayoi-kun didn't overslept, he would be cheering her on right now."

"I'm truly sorry about that. But anyway Kasukabe won't have much problems. Right now the only people who can win against her is me and Kōryū..... no, even I would only barely win."

"Eh?"

Asuka doubt her own hearing, eyes opening wide.

Izayoi yawned not having a bit of that usual feeling of arrogance, he must be speaking the truth then.

The almighty power of the「Genome Tree」whose power covers a vast category made even Izayoi feel amazed.

Now, even「Vinama Garuda」this type of powerful existence can be materialised, that said, even if one prepares infinite means against it, it would not be considered excessive. From being a prodigy who can predict the future to her huge fire power attacks and yet still be able to operate without restrains, even Izayoi would have a tough battle.

But hearing Izayoi's words, this time, Asuka was truly astonished. Never thought that she would hear such words coming from his mouth.

Asuka carefully scrutinised Izayoi's face with suspicion in her eyes and asked.

".....What happened really, Izayoi-kun. The you of today, is a little weird."

"Is it? I just accessed it calmly. Trying to find someone who can defeat the current Kasukabe is more difficult I suppose. Even i cannot guarantee I'll win against her."

"That might also... be the case."

Although Asuka threw a look of surprise to Izayoi, however, Asuka knew that the act of humility was an accident. It must be due to the fact that he just woke up and hence was so modest. That was the conclusion Asuka came up with, then she thought of something and spoke up.

"Oh right. Before the game, we need to talk to Porol-kun from「Six Scars」about future matters."

"Porol? ......ah ah, that nekomimi chibi leader?"

"Un. We're going to talk about the usage of「Adamantine」."

Asuka shook her tailor-repaired red dress and pointed towards the「Six Scars」flag.

Hearing Asuka words, Izayoi casted his glance elsewhere.

"The usage of「Adamantine」... Hm. Can't we talk about this after we found ochibi-sama?"

"I thought so too, but「Six Scars」are the ones who provided the calculations for the game. Protecting us also requires money, it wouldn't be good if we continue to let them take care of us."

After Asuka finished, both of them put on a expression of seriousness and looked towards 「Six Scars」 flag.

From the battle between the the headed dragon, Aži Dakāha, it's already been three months, the lower levels continue their lives as if nothing had happened. However, not everything returned to normal. The battle with the three headed dragon left behind much damage.

They lost Jack from 「Will-o'-Wisp」.

Part of a vampirificated fire dragons till today, 「Salamandra」 had yet to recover.

And 「No Name」 leader, Jin Russell is still missing. Even through the many search requests by Kōryū and Roc Demon King, but they still haven't found a single clue on his whereabouts.

“We can't find him even with all those methods used, seems like it really is as Willa said."

"Un, it would be better to just assume that he was won over by 「Ouroboros」 while he was helping them."

"I thought so too..... that idiot. Did he mistake his identity."

Izayoi clicked his tongue and swore. When Yō's father went to rescue Asuka and Kuro Usagi, there should have been a choice for him to return together. But Jin did not do so and continued to remain with 「Ouroboros」.

Or maybe he had another plan, but if the person who has the most responsibility in the community continues to constantly be not here, then all of 「No Name」 activities would be frozen.

It's not that there is no way to get him back, it's just that the current situation does not permit it.

Since he, as the leader was not here, 「No Name」 was forced to make certain decisions.

“However, making us make this type of policies that would affect us in the future now.

Seems like the rumours saying that 「Six Scars」 chibi leader has some abilities are true. How merciless of him.”

"But he has already patiently waited for us for quite a long time. Since the one who was the most worried when Jin-kun disappeared three months ago was Porol-kun."

I know. Izayoi echoed in his mind. Lacking a leader to make decisions, Porol fully understands the situation of 「No Name」. It would be more appropriate to thank him instead.

"We can't always depend on Jin. Us too, when it's time to make decisions, we must do it."

"I know already."

Afterwards, the two of them remained in silence and melded into the crowds. The bustling mining town was like a faraway image. If「No Name」was like how it was formerly, then that would have been it's most joyous moments in time.

Walking on the lane of the game venue for a while, they arrived at the cave which was their meeting point.

Looking back at Izayoi, Asuka had a subtle smile on her face and said.

"......I believe that Izayoi-san understands. When that time comes, remember to make a good decision."

"Who knows. When that time comes is still unclear."

Revealing a frivolous smile like that when the dry winds blow across the mine, Izayoi walked into the cave.

That smile was the self-depreciating feeling for the first time after coming to「Little Garden」.

Part 2

—Somewhere else.

Outside of the cave in「Mines of Raging Seas」there was currently a new Gift Game taking place.「Adamantine」ores shone inside even while inside the bedrock to the degree that they were clearly visible from outside, and the whole cave was filled with tri-coloured light.

The cave was bright enough so that they didn't even need to light the cave, if it was made into a tourism spot, it would certainly be popular. Kuro Usagi paced about the referee stage while looking around, worried about the future.

(Even though the mine per se is very useful, but merely using this piece of land for mining is such a waste. We need to consider the plan of developing「Mines of Raging Seas」into an important city.)

Kuro Usagi straightened her ears.

The beautiful scenery of the mines, even among the「Little Garden」was hard to come by.

Speaking of places with exceptional sceneries, the huge tree in「Underwood」is extremely famous, but it didn't possess the same potential as「Storm mine」.

If we can use this piece of land for our foundation, one day, what Izayoi and the others said about surpassing the pride of "Underwood" might actually come true.

(Hai!, I cannot just be preoccupied with thoughts of the future. I need to concentrate on

being the game's referee!)

Standing on the stage prepared by the cave's committee, holding in her hand a Geass Roll she raised the microphone.

"Sorry for the wait everyone! We would soon begin the Gift Game「Adamantine Forge」, Group C preliminary round! Participants, please begin your preparations! I repeat—"

As the stone plate was releasing tri-coloured light, the participants begin their preparations.

Every streak of light contained「Adamantine」.

If we can calculate the contents of the mine, then the result would surely surpass what we can imagine. We only need to obtain the God-like mineral equipment, even striking it rich won't be a dream. Like any other participant, one of「No Name」member –Kasukabe Yō was also feeling excited due to the new gift game, at the same time, she cast her glance towards the「Geass roll」.

『—Gift Game「Adamantine Forge」

Conditions for participation: Gold coin issued by「Thousand Eyes」

Winning conditions:

1. Participants would be split into A-F groups in the preliminary round, the winner would be the participant who has collected the highest amount.

2. The six winners would then compete to see who can mine the most ore.

3. During the preliminaries, it is possible for many people to mine and then group their ore to one person.

4. The participants would be provided with the「Adamantine」equipment loaned by the Host.

5. The winner of the match would be decided by the amount of ore collected.

6. The ore that has been mined can be placed in the Gift Card, if your Gift Card is taken away, it would mean that your ore has also been taken.

Important notice:

Any actions that are against the rules brought about by improper use of Adamantine.

All actions that are against the rules would be reported directly to the ears of the referee, so give up trying to cheat.

Participants prize:

Receive money equivalent to the amount which they mined. They would also get money equivalent to the amount of ore which was taken from them.

Winner's prize:

Right to order the equipment from the gathered「Adamantine」. Anything outside this is also negotiable.

Oath: The host abides by the above, base on one's' name and flag, and would carry out the Game fairly.

Seal of「Six Scar」』

Yō looked at the important notice section and nodded her head knowingly.

(.....Oh i see. The game goes by the method of collecting items, is it because they want to ensure talents and deal away illegal methods if winning?)

As long as there is Kuro Usagi as「Judge Master」on site, all actions that are against the rules would be exposed without question. By setting actions that brings about no purpose as a violation of the rules, there should be no worries of illegal methods used.

At the same time being able to ensure that there are many talents and a high collection rate.

(Two birds with one stone, if one wins like that, it would be three birds with one stone.)

Yō was fired up. Even if she had such an excellent weapon like the「Genome Tree」, however this is two different things. No matter how many excellent gifts one had, one would not feel that it is too many.

Yō patiently waited for tyre starting signal. After making sure of the time, Kuro Usagi straightened her ears,

"Well then! Gift game「Adamantine Forge」– begin!!"

Dong—! The sound of the gong resounded throughout the cave. The participants let out shouts of we've waited very long for this' and started to move.

Yō placed her pick at one side, and extended both arms towards the wall.

If I use the earth dragon gift to dig the wall, it should be easy to obtain the ore.

But relying on this alone might not be enough.

Glancing through the「Geass roll」, this preliminary round does not restrict teamwork. Normally only one from each community would participate, but with this, they can get many

people to join to obtain victory for the preliminary round. This way, those that are not very strong can also obtain victory. Victory can be obtained solely based on the account of 「Adamantine」 collected. That, is the tactic based on an overwhelming amount of people.

(Because one would obtain money equivalent to the amount they mined, others could simply obtain more hands, this way, if one uses the ordinary method of just simply mining, it might be too risky.)

Even though there is the reason of the preliminary round, but in order to remain the top within the competition, one needs to obtain as much ore as possible. Yō placed her hands on the wall, and summoned another eudemon different from the earth dragon.

(The oji-san from the giant race I saw back in the 「City of Brilliant Flames」. That race's name is—)

The hundred handed giant race – Hekatonkheir

Using a Gift of theirs that makes many hands appear from spirit power rather than substance, Yō materialized pale arms around her. If she was able to get used to the giant arms and use them, coupled with the Earth Dragon Gift, she would be able to win the game.

Kasukabe quickly activated the two gifts.

—However,

(—! ! ? % & $ # ! ! ! ?)

Her brain suffered the force of a brunt assault.

There was of course no one there to hit her.

Her brain suffered shock from the increased information that had to be processed.

(How…… How hard……!)

Thinking carefully, humans cannot even use both hands perfectly. Such as “using one’s right hand to write a letter while using one’s left hand to write an argumentative essay.”

This sort of thing, even humans need practice to accomplish. Much less using an enormous amount of arms to work simultaneously without trying once before, adding on the Earth's Dragon Gift, the power for the amount of information that was needed to be processed was comparable to a processor.

(For now, I'll turn off the Earth Dragon's Gift and calm down. Just thinking about controlling all these hands makes me feel uncomfortable. If I perceive the autonomic nerves and give each hand a single command, I might even make them automatic and it shouldn't be difficult after that……!)

"Choiyaaaaaaaaaa!!!"

As Yō was trying to increase her arms, the energetic shout of a young girl resounding within the cave. At that moment, there was a large sound of a part of the cave crumbling down.

Someone was probably deeply digging through the bedrock. But the reason Yō was concerned lied elsewhere.

Turning her head towards the place where that familiar sound came from, Yō widened her eyes from slight surprise.

"Ayesha.....!"

"Are, isn't it Yō! You are also participating, huh!"

Blue-haired girl with a goth loli characteristics – Ayesha Ignis Fatūs looked at Yō from the top of collapsed bedrock. Looks like she was also participating as one of the members of 「Will-o'-Wisp」. Yō stared at the collapsed bedrock with surprise. In the mountain of earth that exceeded her own height, the amount of ores shining brilliantly was enough enter the preliminary group.

"A-Amazing. How did you do it?"

"Fufuun! I'm an earth spirit after all! If you manipulate the osmotic pressure[5] inside a cave a little bit and make the bedrock fragile, they would disintegrate and collapse like this!"

It's Simple! – Ayesha said with triumph. She was the earth spirit that brought along by Willa and Jack from the outside world. But although she was an ordinary earth spirit, she wasn't a pure earth spirit like Melun.

According to Jack, he found her loitering as a wandering ghost after losing her life from the natural calamity like earthquake and took over as her guardian.

After death, she naturally returned to earth and unified, after which, she reincarnated as an earth spirit.

"Is that so..... Asuka seemed to have also won her preliminary round with similar strategy"

Melun, Melulu, Melilu – Hence the reason of coming to this mine along with those three. Asuka passed the preliminary round by destroying the bedrocks full of 「Adamantine」 with the power of those three and gathered it in her Gift Card.

"That's right! This Gift Game is the stage where we – the earth spirits are unrivaled! Fufun, this time, I will be the one to win!"

Fuhahahaha! – Ayesha left while leaving behind a loud laughter.

So far, Yō easily handled everything and finished them, but the Game stage this time is this stage. And Ayesha's attribute as earth spirit is the biggest threat.

Now, what to do, Yō folded her arms as she thought about that.

Although they provided pickaxes, in reality they were not needed. It was a Gift Game where you could freely use Gifts to win, so probably various different means are needed to win.

(If I use the「Genome Tree」, I should be able to win, but I want to refrain from using it as much as I can in the preliminary round. .....Hmm, this is troublesome.)

After the fight with Three Headed Dragon, Yō diligently researched about the penalty of 「Genome Tree」. As a result, she understood that for the restoration of spirit level after imitating the Gift of the strongest kinds, about one month was needed.

Although there are individual differences between transformations to strongest kinds, Yō used that as a time limit and set up the battle. That power is absolutely not meant for the preliminary round.

Above all, there is a common principle that the trump card of the leader of community shouldn't be revealed so easily in the Gift Game. To say nothing of the fact that Yō wanted to preserve her true power in the preliminary round.

Reforming herself, Yō manifested just three hands of Hekatonkheir, and concentrated to control each of them respectively.

(If I can make them move automatically like heart and internal organs, then the work efficiency would rise in one go.....!)

Raising the concentration, she began to skillfully control the pale hands.

Breaking bedrock with one hand, thrusting pickaxe with second, and carrying out the earth with third.

For now, this was the first set. For now, digging through comes first.

Rhythmically repeated the action from one to three, she gradually increased the number of sets.

Simultaneously controlling three, six, and then nine giant hands, she dug and shaved the shining bedrock at the same time. The transparent giant hands that had pale spiritual bodies, had similar physical strength as Yō. And in addition to various mythical beasts like Giants, Griffin and Salamander, she also had Gifts from hundreds of various animals.

No matter how hard the bedrock was, for the current Yō, it was no more than scrapping a paper. The spiritual hands broke inside bedrock in a flash and kept digging through.

(Automatization of hands is done.....! This Gift is more amazing than I thought.....!)

After putting so much power in each hand and working simultaneously, the result are expected to be over the top. It was also possible to use countless types of tactics in one-on-one battles.

She got excited in heart for discovering such thing and continued digging.

If she continues at this pace, then she won't even lose to Ayesha. But the moment she was planning to further increase her hands and increase the pace, Ayesha's scream resounded within the cave.

"Wh-What are you doing!? That's my Gift Card!"

"Hmph. Giving Gift Cards to the likes of earth spirits is the same as throwing pearls before swine."

"Youth spirits are suited to plow the lands!"

Ayesha's angry voice and voices of others ganging up on her.

Is there some kind of trouble? – Yō strained her ears and concentrated on eavesdropping.

"Griffith-sama, please take a look! To the amount that this earth spirit girl dug up!"

"It's certainly top class among the preliminary round!"

"Ooh. Considering she is a earth spirit, she gathered quite a lot. I'll receive them with pleasure."

—Griffith? – Yō inclined her head after hearing the familiar name. What's more she heard some intolerable lines.

Stopping her hands for the time, Yō looked towards the place where the scream came from.

"Alright. Tie her up and let's move ahead. More we mine – better. And as well as taking other participants..."

"Tei!"

"Guaaaaaaaaaa, someone hit meeeeeeeeeeee!"

For start, she knocked them down.

Griffith and others who were hit, penetrated the bedrock and were blown off to the outside. Although it wasn't a hit as strong as Izayoi's, but the hitting and blowing them off with hundred hands ended up more effective then she thought.

.....However, she had a feeling that she had met that fellow somewhere before.

But Yō wasn't someone who could remember the faces of irrelevant fellows.

Casting that thought aside, Yō bend her head and gave a hand to Ayesha.

"Ayesha, are you alright?"

"Y-Yes. .....But is this okay? For you to help me?"

"? After all, isn't this a mining game? Fight in the preliminary round seems meaningless. It's not fair that way."

"That's true, but..... Well, nevermind."

Thank you – Ayesha turned away looking embarrassed. She looked like she wasn't too pleased, but still thanked her. She became more obedient since a while ago.

Yō also nodded with a smile. They both decided to return back to mining, but their ears were hit by a thunder roar that reverberated in the cave.

『—You are hindering me yet again? Imitating girl!!!』

Along with the roaring thunder, the third generation mythical beast – a hybrid of Griffith and Longma「Hippogriff」came rushing at them through the wind along with two Griffiths.

Seeing that appearance, Yō finally remembered about him.

"Are you perhaps..... that Horsemeat-san from「Two Wings」that was expelled from「Underwood」?"

『Who's a horsemeat!!!』

Griffith Greif retorted with a rough breathing. He was the son of Draco Greif and also a half-sibling of Gryphon Gry. Several months ago, he competed against Yō in the race game「Rider of Hippocamp」that was held in「Underwood」on the harvest festival.

"I'm surprised. You came fleeing on the east side, eh?"

『Hmph, I wanted to reclaim my glory from the southern side. And, my expectations were met! If I acquire「Adamantine」weapon from this Game, then moving to the five digit gates won't be a dream anymore! For the「Nameless」like you to seek「Adamantine」, there's a limit to not knowing your place!』

"He-Hee."

"Is that so."

Two of them responded with bothered faces.

Even though he said that, by all rights, Yō and Ayesha were from the Host's side. Even if they didn't appear in Game, they would still be involved in some way without a doubt.

But being ignorant about that matter, Griffith barked and prepared the dragon horn.

『However, this is a good opportunity. I received a debt of humiliation from you. It would be bad if I don't return it now! Prepare yourself, monkey girl!』

"Ah, okay"

She felt the power and took the posture. In「Underwood」, she seems to have felt that he was fairly powerful, but it couldn't be helped now that memories of him were not left anymore.

—How did I win back then?

While thinking about such things, Yō entered the combat mode.

Without understanding Yō's such behavior, Griffith and roared like a beast.

"GEEEYAAAaaa!!!"

Without hesitation, he charged forth with the pointed horn that was sticking out from his head. Instantly, the thunderous roar resounded within the cave. The ground where two of them were standing was hit, and hollowed out by a shockwave that made one wonder if it would create a cave-in.

But Yō didn't even try to avoid it. She slipped the Dragon Horn under her arm and stopped it in place.

『Wha!』

Griffith raised a voice of astonishment along with anguish. That was only natural.

Last time she used a staff of Kirin and stopped the charge with it, but this time she simply caught it. For those who didn't know what kinds of death struggles she had to overcome, this was an incredible progress.

Yō, whose body stored the Gifts of Giants ＋α, struck the barrier of Griffith who became a Draco Greif.

"Do–sei!"

『Gah!!?』

He crashed on the bedrock with his right wing bent down. It was probably not broken, but with this, the flying would become difficult. Griffith barely managed to stand, however the damage wasn't small.

While scraping the ground with his hoof, he hatefully gnawed.

(S..... Strong! How in the world does some imitation have so much power.....!?)

Griffith is foolish but he isn't stupid. After one exchange of attacks, he easily guessed the difference between their powers.

If the difference in strength is great, I'll try winning with speed – thinking that, Griffith raised

a neigh and dashed.

"GEEEEYAAAaaa!!!"

"—Fighting in such a place, are you idiots—!!!"

Ayesha who saw the clash of Kasukabe Yō and Griffith at point blank range, faced towards the entrance of the cave and dashed with all her power not get dragged in it. Although she held the advantage in the Game, she was still no more than earth spirit. If she got swallowed up in their fight, she surely wouldn't come out alive.

And that was the same for other participants.

They who were digging with pickaxes were struck with thunderous roar, and started escaping full of terror.

Griffith's followers also screamed while holding the pickaxes in one hand.

"It's a disaster! Griffith-sama still hasn't come!"

"There's no other way! We have to escape!"

And they started escaping first. It might look irresponsible, but people on lower floors that could interrupt their fight were nowhere to be found.

Kuro Usagi as a judge could intervene, but unfortunately, she was eating rice crackers with one hand and drinking tea with the other. Careless fight was becoming fiercer by the second.

Running while scraping the bedrock with his hoof, Griffith roared.

『You imitation girl..... How about this!!!』

Growing the Dragon Horn, Griffith began to emit lightning throughout his body and began to fly inside the cave.

He who was a mix of Griffin and Longma – third generation mythical beast called「Hippogriff」, released his spirit level, and created giant whirlpool in the air that could be seen clearly and charged at Yō.

The whirlpool covered Griffith's body and destroyed surrounding materials like a drill and swallowed them up. If someone were to be caught up in it, they would become a minced meat.

Although murder was forbidden in this Gift Game, Griffith who lost it couldn't care about that. On the contrary, in his voice there was a clear impatience.

Yō imitated「Marchosias」from「Genome Tree」and got ready to charge. She had no intention to run. And unbelievably, she intended to stop the blow directly.

Ayesha who was looking at the battle situation while running screamed with a pale face.

"A-Are you an idiot!? There's no way you can stop that!? Just run already!!"

While Ayesha urged her to escape, their clash was already unavoidable.

Putting both hands in front, Yō prepared to receive Griffith's charge.

"It's okay. There's no problem if it's at this level."

『Keep talking imitating girl—!!!』

Wearing whirlwind and lightning on his body, the Draco Greif howled.

Equipping the armor of "Marchosias" on her body, Yō stopped him with both hands and simultaneously released her own Gifts.

"Griffin"

"Pegasus"

"Salamandra"

"Hekatonkheir"

And the Gift she got from Roc Demon King in the previous battle "Grand Garuda".

After releasing five Gifts at the same time, concentrated whirlpools of power started surrounding Yō. Several tens of giant hands, covered in shining winds and flames of golden feathers appeared around Yō and gathered to protect her.

After the battle with Demon Lord Alliance "Ouroboros" and Three Headed Dragon, The Gifts Yō held were innumerable. Compared to her when she visited "Underwood" the level of battle was different.

From outsider's perspective, Griffith's inferiority was obvious.

But to Griffith who became a Draco Greif, there was no choice to back down.

Born from the genealogy of governing courage, he was not allowed to escape from battle.

"GEEEEYAAAaaa!!!"

Reckless to the end. While aware of losing, he didn't stop his feet.

Although Griffith transformed into rock drill, that level of power was a joke for Yō. Giant hands broke through atmosphere barrier in a flash.

The shining wings, flames of golden feathers along with giant's firsts crushed the Draco Greif.

『Gugyaaa!!!』

A shriek – Or perhaps a sound as if the air inside his body exploded was heard and foams burst out from Griffith's mouth. While grasping him tightly with giant hands, Yō slowly put her hand down.

Griffith lost consciousness while twitching. Seeing her complete victory, his attendants left him and escaped together. You might think they are disloyal people, but that couldn't be helped as well. Because this fight couldn't be called a fight anymore.

Ayesha who watched the fight while hiding around debris had her breath taken and was twinkling her eyes.

(I can't believe it..... Only a few months have passed, she shouldn't have change so much, and yet...)

It was approximately half year ago when they first met her at "Fire Dragon Birth Festival".

At that time, the powers of Yō and Ayesha were about equal. Depending on the Game affinity, the scales of victory could inline on either side.

Despite so… In just a few month, there appeared a clear gap in strength between them.

Not noticing the complicated gaze of Ayesha, Yō walked toward Griffith.

After confirming that he fainted, Yō released a small sigh and picked up the Gift Cards that he carried.

"Ayesha..... and other people mined these ores with great trouble, so I'll be taking them"

With rustling sounds, she took several Gift Cards from behind the wings. Fighting and plunder strayed from the point of this Game, but It's was different in case of challenge.

In any case, seller and buyer always complain at each other. It was usual for the loser to be ripped off by the winner.

With Ayesha's Gift Card in hand, Yō walked towards the mountain of earth where she was hiding and called out to her.

"Here, Ayesha. Gift Card."

"O-Oh. Thank y—"

At that moment.

DOOOOOOOoon!!!

The sound of a gong resounded inside the cave.

"……Ah"

"Eh……!!?"

Understanding what that sound signified, both of them raised the stiff voices.

Four cards including Ayesha's were still in Yō's hands.

『Time's up! With this the Game has ended! Currently the one with the most "Adamantine" in possession is— Oh what a surprise! It's our –「No Name」player Kasukabe Yō!』

"Eh, w-wait!"

Kasukabe Yō got flustered. They included the ore's of Ayesha to her without a doubt. But being ignorant to that, Kuro Usagi ringed the gong.

This is bad. If the victory ends up being decided just like that, then the lawfulness of the Game will become questionable.

Yō's hand, who started walking to protest, was seized by Ayesha.

"Stop it. Yō was one who recovered that Gift Card. The Judgment is correct."

"B-But."

"It's fine already! I would have been ashamed even if I had won like this!"

"It's not the matter of shame! This is about the fairness of the Game! I'm not happy to have won like this!"

Yō raised her voice unusually high. Ayesha shook her head along with her blue twintails.

The divinity of Games dwells behind the law of fairness. If you compete while abiding to the rules, then the victor could be decided without leaving grudges behind. Therefore, this kind of conclusion should not be permitted.

Ayesha also understood Yō's words. After awkwardly scratching her bangs silently for some time, Ayesha started with a silent voice.

"Even so, I still won't be pleased with this, so…… accompany me for a bit."

"After this?"

"Yes. There are many things that are needed to be discussed about the migration of「Will-o'-Wisp」to the east side. I wanted to have a serious discussion with Yō at least once. You can invite Kuro Usagi as well if you want."

"B-But……"

"It's fine! You have your own things to think about, and I have mine!"

Defeated by her vigor, Yō awkwardly nodded. Usually, Ayesha was complaining more, so her current reaction was surprising. But they quickly started preparing for the next game, and began withdrawing players without even giving them an opportunity to ask questions. Yō was also forced to leave.

There might be some problems with「Will-o'-Wisp」. Keeping in mind to ask about it in detail at another opportunity, Yō and Ayesha left the cave.

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1 Japanese pun here: it's a pun on 女 (woman) and 姦 (noisy). The kanji for noisy consists of three woman (女). ↩

2 Referring to the origin of Santa Claus/Father Christmas. Before Christianization the Germanic people celebrated Yule during Winter. The Christians absorbed, like others things, this as a part of the religion. Yule featured an event called "Wild Hunt" (a procession of ghost in the sky), Odin was the leader of this "hunt". One name of Odin was Langbarðr (long-beard). All of this influenced Santa Claus: the beard, the hunt (the horses in the hunt). See Wikipedia ↩

3 OK Author-sama is either wrongly informed, either mixing different stuff together. I'll put aside the declining of gods which is more complicated than stated. "Renaissance revolution" "Risorgimento" and the "mystery that derived from the arts" looks like a mixing of the Renaissance which happened from 14th~17th century in Europe which started in the Italian peninsula, and the Risorgimento (resurgence, revival) which is the consolidation of the differents states in Italian peninsula from 1815~1871.
"German civilian" may refer to the Austrian Empire which were in war during these time against mostly Kingdom of Sardinia and some revolutionaries.
It looks like Author-sama mixed the Renaissance were humanist sought the Ancient Greece (and Rome) studies, with notably the revival of neo-Platonism. In the religion side the learning of old philosophy text (notably Plato) gave some different change of view: Protestant Reformation is the best example of the humanism influence.
And the Risorgimento which happen later with notably fights/wars with the Austrian Empire ("German"). For his sake: risorgimento can be translated into renaissance in italian, but it's kinda tricky. ↩

4 Kojiki (古事記, Records of Ancient Matters): It contains various songs and poems about myths. It was composed by Ō no Yasumaro (requested by Empress Gemmei) in 711-712. ↩

5 Osmotic pressure: a hydrostatic pressure caused by a difference in the amounts of solutes between solutions that are separated by a semipermeable membrane. ↩

Chapter 2

Part 1

——「No Name」Base of operation·former residential area.

The old gentleman who wore swallowtail tuxedo and bowler hat...Grim Reaper Baron La Croix, along with Head Maid Leticia and the leader of「Will o' Wisp」Willa the Ignis Fatuus, Observed the abandoned town of「No Names」that turned to ruins..

Croix let out a little sigh as he overlooked the ruined town.

"...So awful. This is more serious than I imagined. Wouldn't it be better to say that the whole town has been flattened to the ground?"

He grabbed a piece of rubble.

And it crumbled after it produced a wave of sound.

The seams and depression on the dried ground could be seen with just a glance. It was not hard to imagine the possibility of cracking if left alone.

The dust-filled street was already unsuitable for residential purposes.

Croix raised his bowler hat and watched his surroundings.

"Although the earth spirit girls had been working hard, just the farm alone would exhaust them. It might be better to just invite an earth god."

Croix pressed down his bowler hat and started to come up with a rehabilitation plan.

On the other hand, the Head Maid Leticia showed a difficult expression towards Croix's suggestion.

"Don't speak nonsense. This piece of land had been protected by Lily's clan for generations, we were only borrowing it. If we just invite an earth god by our own decision, it would be too unreasonable to her family."

"Ah ah, there does seem to be an Ukanomitama Myōbu[1]. If the direct descendent of that spirit rank holder still exists, then it's just right. I will report this matter to the Inari Taisha[2], and take a new Divinity."

As she listened to Croix who was speaking of some extreme comments, Leticia was shocked.

"...Wait. Don't tell me, you want to let Lily inherit the Divinity!? How exactly do you plan to do that?"

“That kind of thing, won’t it be fine if Alma-dono and I write a letter of recommendation? Originally that Lily girl is the direct descendant of Ukanomitama. She might be immature now, but receiving the Divinity while training is nothing much. Towards someone as hardworking as Lily, the other party will also make an exception.”

Croix spoke confidently while pressing on his bowler hat.

Although Leticia was speechless against his nonsensical actions, she felt that it was a good idea.

Despite being easily forgotten, this man was one of the most praiseworthy people from the Main Gods. Along with the Fertility God, Almathea’s recommendation, it should not be difficult.

“Myōbu doesn't possess high divinity,, but it is a Divinity worshipped by major sectors such as agriculture, industry and business. It is a necessity in city development that’s starting from scratch. Training will be better the earlier it is. If we don’t develop the city faster, how to consider the matter of「Will o’ Wisp」migration?”

“That’s… Mah, that’s also true.”

Leticia looked towards Willa at her side.

—— After the battle with the Three Headed Dragon,「Will o’ Wisp」migrated to「No Name」Base of operation. With the reason of “it is dangerous for them to stay at the North Floor by themselves”, they migrated to their Base of operation.「No Name」Base of operation had plenty of rooms, but to accommodate more than fifty children, it was still slightly cramped. Hence they thought it was about time to rebuild the ruined town in the residential area. But Willa, the leader, had no clear policy, she could only look down with troubled eyes.

“Sorry. Because the operation of the Community have all been handled by Jack… I am still unsure of what to do.”

Willa shook her blue hair and hung her head.

Jack who was her strategist was no longer there.

For the sake of defeating the Three Headed Dragon, he transformed into a Demon Lord and fell in battle.

「Will o’ Wisp」actual operation authority, needless to say, was in his hands. The art pieces that functioned as the only source of meager income for the Community were also made by Jack.

「Will o’ Wisp」as an organization, being half destroyed was not an overstatement. If anything, then there was only Willa, one of the strongest members in the North Floor who was still around.

Feeling partly guilty for the current situation of「Will o' Wisp」, Croix directed his gaze towards her.

"Willa-kun. I sympathize with your current state, I also respect Jack's actions… Despite that, how can you as the leader behave like this? The duty to protect the Community rests upon your shoulders from here on out."

Ah... Willa sank her shoulders.

Although his tone was overly harsh, at this point, she could not afford to be spoiled.「No Name」could provide support, as well as help in migration process. But protecting their Community could only be left to the members of「Will o' Wisp」.

Three months have already passed since their battle.

The memorial of the dead was already over, the time for condolences and mourning period had already long past.

Willa must also make her policies as the leader of the Community. Their outstanding strategist, the gentleman who looked after others, Jack, was no longer in this world.

Towards Willa who sank her shoulders with zero confidence, Leticia showed a gentle smile.

"Even though Croix said that, this matter isn't so pressing. You can learn slowly. Fortunately, Willa-dono's spirit rank is quite similar to Croix. You should learn as much as you can."

"Un, I agree on this totally! I will learn it step by step responsibly."

"If ever sexually harassed, look for me. I will aim at his butt and impale him."

The Head Maid with beautiful blonde hair held her fist tightly.

Croix detected a moment of cold atmosphere and tipped his bowler hat down.

Although Willa was suppressed by the pressure, facing the two of them who were friendly towards her, she still raised her face and nodded.

"Umm...Thank, thank you very much. As a member of the Alliance Community, I am willing to practise with each other."

"The same goes for us, Willa-dono. We wish for the contract with「Will o' Wisp」to last an eternity.

“Despite that being the case, for your living expenses, please take on the various miscellaneous jobs for「No Name」. We have already order-made your maid uniform. Please wear it once you receive it.”

“Ha...Hai.”

Even though Willa was nervous, she still managed to reply energetically.

Leticia looked around the ruined town once more.

“It seems that the Gift Game held at「Mines of Raging Seas」is going to be scheduled as a monthly festival. If we arrange「Adamantine」mining and circulate it, then our income will be raised. If the residential area revives, it will probably reclaim the glorious scenery there once existed in the past. Major business Communities like「Six Scars」and「Thousand Eyes」should be able to process even the raw ores for us.

“—— But, I also I also thought about that.”

The old gentleman revealed a meaningful grin. Leticia frowned as she was interrupted.

"...What? Is there any objection?"

"No no, that's not the case. But according to the trade situation from now on, I think there is also the possibility of having the mined「Adamantium」ores be monopolized by「Six Scars」."

What? Leticia asked back in surprise.

Croix showed an expression of holding his laughter, narrowing his eyes.

"So troublesome. Is the current generation the golden era? That Garol's son actually has this kind of talent. It is understandable why that Kouryu who was once a drifting log would take him as a disciple. Aiya, Porol boy is so capable. This is wonderful. I sincerely look forward to his future."

Speaking words of praise without any sarcasm, it was a rare moment for a person like him with a twisted personality.

Leticia and Willa turned their heads and looked at each other, but they still could not understand the meaning behind Croix's grin. He spun his walking cane as he flashed a grin that revealed his canine tooth.

"...Oh right. Speaking of「Mines of Raging Seas」, how should we handle that captive?"

"Captive?"

"It's that Demon Lord Alliance ——「Ouroboros」youth. We caught him right?"

"If that condition can be counted as captured then it's also correct. He is now kept with Kouryu-dono."

Croix and Leticia showed difficult expressions. Willa on the other hand tilted her head in confusion.

"Captive, who do you mean?"

"「Ouroboros」Origin candidate… you probably won't understand like this. One of the executive called His Majesty surrendered to us after the fight. Didn't you also meet him?"

"Willa clapped her hands with a po. Recalling the incident of her kidnapping back then while spinning her finger.

"Ugh, the boy with white hair and golden eyes...right?"

"That's him. And he is also the cause of this incident. Many suggested to execute him, but with Jin and Sandra being captured by them, exchanging captive might also be possible. The fact that he is an important person to those people will not change."

“His Majesty —— the youth that led the Demon Lord Alliance「Ouroboros」who bravely fought at the front line.

In the fight against the Three Headed Dragon he helped Kasukabe Yō, and he also lent his power to Sakamaki Izayoi, it was really undeterminable what he was thinking when he surrendered. In this three months, he maintained silence.

The ones troubled were「Floor Master」instead. The prison that could keep a strong person like him was very limited. He was kept in a prison surrounded by the natural barrier of「Adamantine」in「Mines of Raging Seas」for now, but if His Majesty wanted to, he could probably break that place and then escape.

“If we are going to exchange hostage I hope the other side would send the messenger soon. There is nothing good that can come out from him being in our hands. Since now when all the Last Embryo are all defeated, there is no reason to kill him who was once a competitor.”

“Is that so?”

“That is so. In the near future, Little Garden Central Network would also take some action towards Izayoi boy. The frontal clash on the surface should not happen again, because we already won against「Ouroboros」in the competition.”

Victory in the competition —— such interpretation as if battling in a game, caused the two to be confused. It was pointless for them to ask as they did not know the cause. It took suitable time and location to clarify such matters.

Croix spun his walking stick and hit the ground with the tip.

“Alright! The patrol has just started, Head Maid and Apprentice Maid-dono! Let’s finish the outline sketch within these few days first, then take action for the rebuilding as soon as possible!”

“Don’t neglect miscellaneous duties. I am superior in terms of our position. Although you might be a senior member, if you think you will get special treatment then you made a big mistake.”

Leticia pointed out the facts, Croix shrugged his shoulders. Despite his return, it did not mean that his rank also returned. The things he lost were plenty.

Did that mean I had to display my usefulness and work tirelessly, Croix smiled bitterly. The three continued their inspection for the sake of completing the outline sketch.

Part 2

Izayoi, Asuka and the Mel sisters that went for the Alliance gathering walked into「Six Scars」branch cafe, one of the few places to rest in the mine.

Rumor has it that if the cafe was below the mine, it would cause insecurity to people, but

this place had not neglected it.

In order not to let dust enter the open air Teahouse, they manipulated air current to make a wind barrier surrounding the shop, increasing the open balcony area.

Water tree seemed to have grown in the upper stream of the nearby river, the water was clear and pretty. It was not a problem to use it for brewing red tea. When the balcony make a major expansion, it would probably become an excellent shop.

The two were invited to the biggest open balcony.

On the balcony, Alliance partner「Six Scars」youthful leader Porol Gundark, together with「Perseus」leader Laius were waiting.

Upon seeing Izayoi, Laius immediately stood up.

Izayoi who made eye contact with Laius, hurried in with a ferocious grin as if he found a new toy.

“You came, Luilui. Congratulations on passing the preliminary round. So hardworking.”

“You’re annoying, shut up. Congratulated by you made me want to puke. Don’t be so conceited. And also don’t call me Luilui.”

“Don’t say that Luilui. I will also work hard to pass the preliminary, please look after me in the main competition. Relying on our alliance bond, let us take the top two spots.”

Izayoi laughed joyfully and slapped his shoulder. Laius showed a never seen before awkward cold sweat and shifted his eyes. Both sides showed a disrespectful attitude, but Laius had a reason for doing so.

To Laius, Izayoi was the person that caused the destruction of his Community. Although he was also responsible, the final blow was unquestionably dealt by Izayoi.

Laius had not been so insensitive to sit together with him.

Izayoi had considered his feeling and hence tried to find fault in him with an intimate attitude, but in outsider’s eyes it only showed a one-sided bully.

Asuka watched the scene of Izayoi playing around with Laius, sighed in amazement.

“Izayoi-san. No matter how rotten he is, he is also our alliance partner, so stop bullying him”

“Wait a minute, that red one. Don’t say I’m rotten so naturally.”

“That’s right. Luilui is just just rotting now only.”

“Almost rotten!?”

“Ara, that also seems to be right.”

“Immediate agreement!? Isn’t the meaning the same anyway!?”

“So silly. Now is the best time.”

Asuka showed a surprised grin, Izayoi on the other hand just laughed heartily.

「No Name」and「Perseus」had a deep grudge between them.

However, they were also companions that crossed the death boundary in the fight against the Demon King.

They heard from Kasukabe Yō who participated in the same operation, Laius’s thoughts had become very serious. That’s why he was willing to put the past behind, taking on the same flag with them.

That said, it was only an agreement on paper. A person’s feeling was not so simple. Laius showing an awkward face could not be helped.

Because Alliance partner「Six Scars」leader Porol held back his laughter and returned to the main topic.

“It’s fine if you can get along, both side can stop now. Today we have come to talk about serious matter. There is also someone I want to introduce, so please show some courtesy today.”

“Someone you want to introduce?”

“En. I found a sponsor willing to provide fund for「Six Scars」operations from now on. Since it’s a rare chance, I took the chance to let everyone meet.”

“Hoh? Which Community?”

“I will save the introduction until the other party arrives. It should be soon if there was no accident.”

“Alright. —— Then, what has nekomimi chibi come to talk about? If it’s the contract for exclusive sale of「Adamantine」, without proper compensation in response don’t expect us to agree.”

Izayoi showed a provocative smile. Porol also returned a smiling face that showed his teeth. This point indeed was like the feline race. It was like a lion cub before its prey.

Porol took out a paper with drawings from his bag —— something like a blueprint.

“Actually, after hearing the existence of「Adamantine」mine, I have already requested the dwarves to design this. Since there is noone more familiar with metal other than their race.”

“You mentioned design, so you really wanted to build something?”

“It can be counted as that. This is the blueprint —— known as the「Spirit Train」.”

Porol slammed the blueprint on the table, announced confidently.

Hearing an unexpected suggestion, Izayoi and Asuka stared at each other, surprised.

“Ugh —— it’s called「Spirit Train」? Meaning that the train runs on spirit energy?”

Asuka tilted her head and asked. She originally thought that it would be used for weapon or castle construction, this suggestion was unbelievable to her.

But Porol’s eyes beamed, his nekomimi stood up.

“Yes, this is the train that runs on the Gift from spirits and their passages. This is known as「Spirit Train」. Little Garden was way too big, due to convenience issue, at most only the cities near「Astral Gate」were developed. The undeveloped forest, sea, resources, and Gift Games in undeveloped areas should have plenty more.”

“「Spirit Train」is for the sake of connecting those?”

The more Asuka listened, the more confused she got, Izayoi on the other hand crossed his fingers and started thinking.

“That’s true, This city, just the Lower Floor diameter alone measures up to millions of kilometer. Undeveloped land definitely exists. But just building the train alone, I don’t think it can replace walking completely.”

“Correct. Wouldn’t Hippocamp cargo ship and Stymphalian birds flying ship be better?”

In actual fact there were many Communities that survived on such transportation.

「Two Wings」from「Draco Greif」was also one of those. Transport Communities were needed regardless of time and place, but since the important cargo was left in their care, trust and actual achievements were necessary. Little Garden already existed many Communities with hundreds of years of history, newcomer entering the industry was very difficult.

But Porol shook his head, pointed at the blueprint of「Spirit Train」.

“You seem to misunderstood something, I never thought about building a normal train. You should know the passage spirits and demons used —— the Astral Vein?”

“Astral Vein?”

“Ah, that I might know. Is it referring to the Gift of「Will o’ Wisp」that instantly teleport using the flame of lantern?”

Asuka raised her right hand and commented, Porol responded with a nod.

“It’s slightly different, but basically similar. It existed for the purpose of letting the Gifts existing in nature flow naturally, it can be considered as the blood veins of the world. Spirits and demons can make use of this Astral Vein to instantly move to faraway places. The lantern Gift Red onee-san mentioned, probably relied on the power of Pale onee-san to make something similar to Astral Vein.”

Porol’s way of naming made Asuka uncomfortable.

Although she understood Red onee-san was Asuka, Pale onee-san was Willa, but be it Pest or Porol, why must they call her「red person」.

“Mah, forget it. The key point is that the train called「Spirit Train」, is a train for moving at high speed on the Astral Vein right?”

“That’s so.「Adamantine」is a metal that can store many kinds of Gift. Including some advantageous reasons, Astral Vein —— Little Garden’s blood vein gathered here, many Gifts concentrated to this「Mines of Raging Seas」!”

Porol excitedly opened the mine map.

Izayoi and Asuka were also interested, they looked at the map.

“It was mentioned before, the「Adamantine」buried in this mine has an unusually large amount right?”

“I already heard about that from the Ochibi-sama[3]. It seems to be an amount not existed even in the God realms.”

“Yes. Metals like「Adamantine」and「Orichalcum」[4] are「Gifts of Stars」that are only refined after thousands of years in Astral Vein. It was not something that could be mass produced naturally. Hence I thought. Maybe this「Mines of Raging Seas」... was actually a major scale reconstruction of land by someone who twisted the Astral Vein flow, forcefully gathered the Gifts or something.”

“Reconstruction, land?”

“Yes! Strong Astral Vein… Similar to the artery of Astral Vein mainly categorized into three types. Such as the water flow of rivers and oceans. Magma flowing in the earth's crust and leaf mold from trees. Also typhoon and such weathers. If careful calculations could be made to all these, for the sake of gathering Astral Vein and created man-made mountain, river and ocean, then creating a Gift gathering place is possible.”

Hah? Asuka let out a broken voice, such a thing was just too miraculous.

Indeed, if the mountain and sea could be man-made, then weather should be able to be manipulated as well.

Since typhoon and storm was nurtured by mountain and sea.

Upon considering this, Izayoi suddenly thought of some clue.

“Don’t tell me… It has something to do with the「Sea above Mountain」I saw during the「Hippocamp Rider」?”

The first time Izayoi witnessed the scenery of the sea upon arriving in Little Garden.

That was the「Sea above Mountain」in the upper river stream of「Underwood」. At that time he thought it was the structure of Little Garden, but if it was man-made, then it could be understood now why it was illogical.

Porol replied to Izayoi’s question joyfully.

“As expected of brother. I am also concerned why the mountain top can collect enough water to make a sea, hence I asked my teacher, it seems that the mountain sea is connected to the「Tritonis Waterfall」at the「End of the World」. Meaning the water falls from the sky.”

“...This means, falling from「End of the World」, will result in falling onto that mountain sea?”

“That’s right. Then travelling the river stream by water tree from the South Floor, after a long period of time arriving in this「Mines of Raging Seas」, then flowing to「Tritonis Waterfall」.”

The necessity for land to be rich, was to have a huge water flow that would not be cut.

Clear water flow, rich land, blowing Mountain Sea wind.

There existed a character that used「End of the World」to create that flow, making a Gift gathering land.

“Don’t tell me it’s your teacher...「Great Sage who Devastate Seas」made this?”

“En, teacher seemed to have participated. Since he is the holder of thousand sea and thousand mountain spirit rank. But he said it was the former「No Name」members understanding the trick to make this.”

Haha, Porol hugged his chest in amazement. Since it was the former「No Name」that built this, then Canaria would also be part of it.

If it was that woman, it was indeed possible to make something this exaggerated.

Even in the Outer World, she also liked major scale and exaggerated buildings, her eyes always beaming.

When watching Itaipu Dam on top of the Iguazu Falls, she might have recalled her

Community's achievement.

"Mah, I understand the situation about the concentration of Astral Vein. Then, how do you plan to use it for transportation? —— No, I will ask this straight. What's the speed?"

Laying your hands in the transportation industry, the first question would still be this. To travel in the vast Little Garden, a considerable speed would be needed. If they wanted to surpass other Communities' tradition and trust, they needed the convenience far surpassing them.

But Porol just laughed, indicating them not to worry.

"Movement in Astral Vein is similar to spatial jump. If it can be realized, as long as there is Astral Vein in the place, it can be crossed within seconds or minutes."

"Sec… Seconds....!"

"...Including cargo?"

"If not then what meaning is there. If the condition of spatial jump and the mobility of the cargo train are both prepared, it can be considered to be much more convenient than「Astral Gate」. Considering the amount of cargo it can transport in one trip, one carriage's load definitely is on the different level compared to a horse cart."

As if he already anticipated the other party's questions, Porol immediately answered.

Izayoi crossed his arms before his chest, thinking deeply about Porol's suggestion. There was no need to lay out the rail, just building the body of「Spirit Train」alone, could definitely reduce the travel time between two places by a large amount.

If the「Spirit Train」was completed, the traffic condition of Little Garden would be revolutionized.

No, not only traffic.

If they could freely adventure regardless if the「Astral Gate」was there —— chances of participating in Gift Games unknown to the world might also increase.

"First we will lay the tracks connecting the「Floor Master」Base of operation. Specifically「Salamandra」,「Draco Greif」,「Laplace Demon」,「Thousand Eyes」and「Onihime Alliance」five locations."

"Uhuh… I only know「Underwood」and「Kouen City」, where are the others?"

"「Laplace Demon」Base of operation is located at North Floor four-digit「Daily Walker」.

「Onihime Alliance」Base of operation is located at North Floor five-digit「Underworld - Shrine of Slaughter」.

「Thousand Eyes」 Base of operation is located in two-digit, but they would provide us all their branch offices..”

“Ara, you have come prepared.”

Asuka commented half impressed, half sarcasm. Since he was able to mention the topic of cooperating with all the「Floor Masters」, he probably had already gotten their consent.

It should be the chips added for the sake of negotiating with「No Name」, but as a member of Alliance this could be considered as lacking in sincerity. It lacked the friendliness that should be shown first.

Porol seemed to be self-aware, he slightly lowered his head and continued.

“I admit that this is very impolite. But please understand, this is preparation done for you to be at ease. The「Floor Master」in charge of security needless to be said, I also know about the major sponsor. Although the land authority has not been obtained, it should not be difficult with「Floor Master」cooperation. After that there is only「Adamantine」provided by「No Name」left, this plan can be started immediately.”

Porol explained the current situation with nervous and enthusiastic tone.

To him, this must be a major project that gambled the fate of「Six Scars」. He was still too young as a leader, so he probably would not have many chances to participate projects of such scales yet.

Seeing as he could prepare up to this extent,「No Name」was already beyond surprised, and instead admired him. It was only four months since the last meeting, he could actually gather such good materials.

(Perhaps it was a good thing that the「Floor Master」all gathered for the post war of the Three Headed Dragon battle. According to the scale of this project, if he used the normal method to book appointments, just approving the plan would take several years.)

The incident of Demon Lord Maxwell destroying the「Astral Gate」also took effect in this matter.

Once「Astral Gate」was destroyed, even big cities like「Kouen City」also faced the problem of being isolated and unable to wait for aid which just happened sometimes ago.

If there was the「Spirit Train」back then, it should be possible to gather forces from everywhere. It would be possible to travel long distances, transport large quantities of cargo, adding a large combat power to the battle. To promote such a Gift, the time now would be the best chance when the threat of Demon Lord Alliance「Ouroboros」was still fresh.

(The reason Porol boy delayed our negotiation, was probably because all the chances had gathered.)

Now is the best time for business talks. This youth leader judged as so, and immediately took action. Such activeness was unimaginable from his young appearance.

“That’s how it is… I understand. Since this is the case we will forget about the matter of delaying our negotiation. —— I have no other questions, what about Izayoi-san? I feel that it is a good thing.”

“...Uh un.”

Asuka asked Izayoi at her side. His expression was still very serious.

The scale of this matter was so big that Izayoi had to consider things much more than usual. The profit and price of the transportation after the train was completed must also be decided. It was necessary to have a detailed contract. And Asuka right now had not thought about all those.

Although regrettable, at this kind of time Izayoi was still the most trustworthy person.

Without his hedonistic grins, he possessed very charming personality.

Recently, she started thinking that the reason he could not be serious for too long, was that Izayoi was actually an easily embarrassed person.

Be it Asuka or Porol, waited silently for his answer while understanding this point.

“...There is one point, I need to confirm this first.”

“What?”

Porol asked back seriously as well. He understood that right now would be the crossroad of negotiation.

Izayoi’s gaze showed a never seen before seriousness. Porol on the other hand concentrated in order to respond to any question the other side would raise. He made many preparations for the negotiation today. He even found a sponsor for the project. It could be said that he was fully prepared.

However, the question that came from Izayoi’s mouth, was beyond Porol’s imagination.

“You —— Can you take responsibility?”

Hearing Izayoi’s question, Asuka and Laius tilted their heads.

Meanwhile Porol sucked in his breath, unable to respond.

As he did not expect this kind of question to be asked at this stage, Porol secretly clicked his tongue, and then pretended to be calm and asked.

“Responsibility… is it. What responsibility is it about?”

“Responsibility for the derivative environmental change caused by this invention.”

“Environmental change? What do you mean, Izayoi-san?”

Asuka was totally lost and tilted her head.

Izayoi pointed at the blueprint with his fingertip and explained.

“Now, 「Astral Gate」 opens twelve times a day. Specifically speaking, the opening of gate to normal people are morning, noon and night four times each period, in which two times are for cargo transportation. Although there are variations from different parts of the place, the differences should not be big. This you do understand right.”

“Ugh, yes.”

Asuka recalled the compiled traffic report she saw when they became the 「Region Master」. Seeing Asuka remembering the matter, Izayoi continued.

“About 200~500 horse carriages per transport. Six times a day, so by deduction, one 「Astral Gate」 could at most allow 3000 horse carriages to pass through. Compared to this, the load capacity of one 「Spirit Train」 per day, how many times do you think it is?”

Hearing Izayoi’s question, Asuka began thinking with a slight change in her expression.

“Ugh… The difference between 「Astral Gate」 and 「Spirit Train」 in terms of convenience, would be load capacity per transportation right. If we borrow Porol boy’s “Not on the same level” as a measurement, assuming one carriage is ten times that of the horse carriage. One train uses ten carriages for transportation, then each transport would be one hundred times the horse carriage?”

“No no, it’s not that simple. In reality the amount of cargo that can be put into one carriage is much more. Tens of round trips per day will become possible. Also pioneering location and city could be directly connected, so the speed would be even faster.”

Facing Porol’s bitter smile, Asuka responded in surprise.

“That really is… impressive. If this is true, then the day to abolishing 「Astral Gate」 would not be far. Just calculation alone would be several hundred times more convenient.”

“Mah, going one step further, the limitations of horse carriage is not the amount of cargo, but the weight. If heavy cargo such as ores can be transported in large quantity, the market flow now will undergo a major change.”

“Yes. If these effects multiplies together, the development of Little Garden will expand at an unusually fast pace. As a result, in the near hundreds of years…No, in a decade Little Garden will experience a huge change.”

As long as it’s through the Astral Vein, no matter the location, 「Spirit Train」 would be able

to transport the cargo.

If it was as Porol said, Astral Vein was the land that Gift gathered, then there would be many eudemons and earth deities residing near there.

Because of this, Izayoi rang the alarm at Porol's plan.

"This is what I am worried about the most. If the capability of「Spirit Train」is as you said, there will be many Communities swarming into undeveloped land due to traffic issue like an avalanche. It is not difficult to imagine that by then, large number of migrants and speed pioneering would trigger conflicts with the natives. There will also be Communities that were stripped of their job because of the upgrade in transportation. The「Region Master」that enjoyed their benefits would not remain silent. These derived conflicts, can you take responsibility?"

"...That's."

The problems Izayoi pointed out, caused Porol to be speechless. Izayoi did not say everything, the problems were actually more than that.

The fee collected from「Astral Gate」was distributed by the「Region Master」.

The「Astral Gate」that「No Name」was in charge of was the same. The cost of using the gate was one gold coin issued by「Thousand Eyes」, horse carriages cost five gold times per carriage. 15% of the fees collected from the usage of gate was contributed to the「Region Master」, 35% contributed to「Floor Master」. The remaining 50% was used as region prosperity and festival funding by the Masters, and also military funding when Demon Lords appear.

But once「Spirit Train」became commercialized,「Astral Gate」would lose its usage.

By then the「Region Master」of various lands would definitely object.

The reason Porol consulted with「Floor Master」first was also in consideration for this matter. He hoped that they would reduce the friction about this matter.

"...So that's what it is. Brother is also an insightful person."

"How to negotiate if I can't even see through this kind of things. Not to mention the world I came from had a few histories of Gold Fever for my reference."

Izayoi also gave positive evaluation for Porol's preparation beforehand.

But because of this, he needed to use an even broader viewpoint to comment.

"...Sorry, I cannot answer if I can take responsibility. Because even I cannot determine if Little Garden will become the next Golden State."

He seemed to know that pretending was pointless, Porol spoke the truth without any

disguise.

—— The so called “Gold Fever”, was talking about the incident in North America around the year 1850.

Back then, due to the discovery of a new gold mine, a huge group of miners and pioneers swarmed in while holding the dream of obtaining the riches. As a result the city prospered, North American population boomed, entering a high speed development.

As long as the「Spirit Train」construction assembly line completed, it would promote the mining of「Adamantine」,「Mines of Raging Seas」would also receive the same development.

Miner population increasing, the shops aiming for that group of people increasing, spending power increasing, population increasing. If everything went well, it would call forth the big bubble era that would be the biggest in history.

However things would not end like that.

「Spirit Train」could severely change the culture of Little Garden up to now.

In a few years’ time, starting from cities that were connected, everyone would wake up from the dream.

“Population increase would lead to demand increase. Demand increase would lead to expense increase. By then everything would lose balance. In the end, various zones would trigger conflicts and frictions with one another. Endangered species would also appear.”

“Just like the Yahi race[5] that was robbed of their land due to the Gold Fever?”

(...Yahi race?)

The instant Porol finished his speech, Izayoi’s eyes were consumed by heat. Asuka did not miss that moment. Despite that being less than an instance, but in that instance, he harbored an emotion similar to rage in his eyes.

But that was still just an instant.

Izayoi clicked his tongue while scratching his head, at the same time hid his passion, and made the conclusion.

“...Right. Mah, if you know that’s simple. What I am trying to say is, do not trigger that kind of incident. If you cannot provide a solution to this, I will not support this negotiation.”

Izayoi’s tone held a firm determination.

Asuka could not help but be covered in cold sweat. After all, the sponsor of the current Gift Game was「Six Scars」.

If they made them angry and withdraw their support, it would be game over.

That gap could only be covered by「No Name」. Unfortunately,「No Name」did not have that much funding.

Just as Asuka was trying to smooth things out, Izayoi seemed to have seen through Asuka's thoughts, shrugged his shoulders and said.

"That said, this is only my personal opinion. It can be treated as one vote in the「No Name」, just hearing it is fine. What does Ojou-sama think?"

"Eh, me?"

"Of course. We are both representative. Oujou-sama please also provide your opinion."

Asuka was rendered speechless by the sudden request to provide her opinion. She probably did not expect the topic to be thrown to her at this point of time. Despite being confused, Asuka had detected Izayoi's intention.

He wanted to let Asuka to act as a suspension[6].

"That, that's also true… It is really uncomparable if purely seeking Community profit. So I do not have much objection to the exclusive sale contract. But I feel that Izayoi's concerns must also be taken into consideration. Since the benefits and risks are not hard to imagine, profit from the rail service must also divide into within alliance and outsiders, and we must also discuss with the various Masters. —— As such when discussing about the exclusive sale contract, we must also consider the counterplan towards the negative impacts as well."

"...Umu. I understand「No Name」intentions. It is to think progressively towards it, but for now it should be withheld, right?"

"Ah ah. Finalizing the directions before the game ends, giving opinions after the closing ceremony."

Towards Porol's question, Izayoi and Asuka nodded their heads. It was true that such topic should be put aside first. Both sides understood that haste makes waste[7]

The scale was too big after all. What they were going to begin was an investment game that had a scale so big it might affect the current state of Little Garden. Be it「Six Scars」,「No Name」,「Perseus」,「Will o' Wisp」, nobody could answer on the scene.

Porol took out the the copies of「Spirit Train」blueprint, changed the topic to the directions from now on after handing a copy each to Izayoi and Laius.

But just before he began —— as if mocking them, a bold laughter could be heard.

"Pu… ka, ha, hahahahaha!!!"

"Who, who is there!?"

The unrestrained laughter echoed throughout the Mining Town.

“Really, I was wondering what you guys are arguing about… what a surprise! So funny! Of course I should laugh! The insight that doesn’t match your height, shouldering responsibilities that you do not need to shoulder, such arrogance! Really a foolish act of humans!”

—— What? The four of them raised their alert.

Where did the sound come from? No, when did he start listening?

Izayoi, Asuka and Laius were definitely not careless. To deceive their ears and eavesdrop, extraordinary technology or Gift would be required.

“...Izayoi-san.”

“Don’t move, Ojou-sama. Due to the echo of the mine, it is difficult to locate the other party.”

The「Mines of Raging Seas」that was built between the canyons, had the specialty of echoing loud noises and making it difficult to determine the source of the sound. If it was Kasukabe Yō, she might easily investigate the source, but Izayoi’s hearing had not developed to such degree.

(Where is he hiding…?)

He focused on seeking out the exits. As the negotiation contents were important, spies sent by other Communities was not impossible. They might have to capture the other party depending on situations.

To be able to take action no matter where the other party appear from, the three of them stood up and took stance.

At this moment, desperate cries raised from the mountains.

“Uwaaaaaahhhhh It’s a mad bull aaaaahhhhh!!!”

—— Hah? Everyone let out a confused sound.

Common sense told them it was impossible to have livestock in the middle of a mine.

No matter how you put it it’s not possible, the four frowned. However, at the other side of the passage, dust cloud did appear from the kicking of hooves. They also felt trembles from the cafe.

Pogogogogo!!! Such rampaging noise was heard.

Since they could hear the screeching from the wheels, it should be a cargo carriage or a chariot.

But it was not only the rumbling noise on the ground.

There was also lightning and thunder roars on the other side of the dust cloud. The existence that was rampaging should be an eudemon. Sensing the presence closing in, Asuka spoke first.

“It seems we can’t run…!!!”

“Ah ah. It isn’t a normal bull that is rampaging after all. —— Alright, we will leave it to Luilui.”

“Hah!? Why me!?”

“Because you are almost rotten. It will be too late after passing the expiry date.”

“That isn’t almost rotten but already rotten!!! At least be consistent your speech!!!”

Pa! Luilui slammed the desk and dashed out of the cafe.

The reason he dashed out was because he probably understood their situation right now. Or that he considered the power balance of the organization. A powerless Community leader could only risk his life. He clicked his tongue, stood rooted in the middle of the Mining Town road.

He drew his Harpe, waiting for the mad bull rushing past the dust cloud. Facing against the slowly approaching roars and lightning, Luilui narrowed his eyes.

(Thunder roar… not only that. There is moisture in the dust cloud. Amphibious type?)

An amphibious type bull eudemon. Along with thunder and lightning, there was not many matching species. Luilui searched through the encyclopedia in his brain. Just wielding thunder and lightning alone meant it was a high ranking eudemon. There was moisture in the dust cloud, so it might have wind Gift as well.

Thunder roaring.

Hurricane blowing.

Bull eudemon clad in water ——

“—— Combining the three elements… Gift of weather? Eh, wait a minute! That isn’t dust cloud, but thunder cloud!?”

Luilui raised a scream. He could not be blamed though.

What rolled up from the ground was not dust cloud. The thunderclaps that rang in the Mining Town —— was the cumulonimbus cloud rolled up from the ground.

What the bull pulled, was a grey chariot covered by cumulonimbus cloud.

That monstrous-like bull was no ordinary bull.

Luilui who felt the spirit status screamed with a pale face.

“Don’t joke with me! Oi, the stupid combi over there! You guys help out also!”

“”Eh, don’t wanna.””

“Ok, don’t wanna!? Eh, don’t wanna!!?”

“”Absolutely don’t wanna.””

“Absolutely don’t wanna!!? Oi, what happened to the bond of alliance!!?”

“The one with the bond already died back then.”

“He was a good man. Let us clapse our hands and remember him.”

Papa, the two clapped their hands. Veins could be seen popping on Laius’s head —— However, it was too late.

“MOOOOOOOON!!!!”

“Gyaaaaaaaaahhhh!!!”

Laius was knocked away by the weather bull and cried in agony.

Mondaiji-tachi continued to clapse their hands in prayer.

Porol who was sipping his tea mumbled as if suddenly discovered something.

“Ah… The tea stalk stood up.”

“Is that so, that’s great.”

Porol raised his nekomimi after discovering this little fortune. To be able to enjoy this tiny blessing at the age of eleven, it seemed that he was very hard working normally.

Seeing such peaceful atmosphere in the interior of the cafe, an amazed voice came from within the cumulonimbus cloud.

“—— What? Seeing your comrade being knocked away, this reaction is really strange.”

There was a bitter smile with a disappointed feeling mixed in the voice. Hearing closely, it felt very immature.

The man who stood up from the chariot waved his hand, the cumulonimbus cloud immediately dissipated. The two weather bulls also knelt down cooperatively.

Judging from the voice, he was the one who laughed just before.

Facing this aura that could be felt even separated by a layer of cloud, Izayoi showed a fearless grin.

“That is our line. Knocking our comrade away without any apology, what are you trying to do?”

“I apologize. But the side that rushed out is your side right?”

“So what? In traffic law the side that knocked the others will be penalized, this is the same regardless of worlds.”

Izayoi spoke as if it was natural. On a side note, Luilui was not dead.

“Is that so? That’s also reasonable. Then as one of the sponsor, let us discuss the matter in detail.”

The man walked down the chariot while holding his laughter. Izayoi and Asuka widened their eyes at this moment. The clothes that man wore was too unexpected.

The man that walked down the weather bull chariot —— seemed to be an oriental man, wore a western jacket over the non-mainstream worn shirt, looked at them with a cigarette in his mouth. After confirming the brand of the cigarette was Seven Stars[8], Izayoi was shocked once again.

An estimated age of the first half of 30s. Looking closely, his jacket, shirt, shoes, etc. were all famous brands Izayoi was familiar with. Where could he have bought those in Little Garden?

But, what really surprised them was not that.

The man filled with culture of the year 2000 —— If the two of them did not guess wrongly.

(...Oi, Ojou-sama.)

(What.)

(This guy, is human?)

Yes —— The man leading the weather bulls that seemed to have some spirit status, was undoubtedly a human. And not the kind which had mixed blood of gods like Laius.

Those two had faced many gods and deities after coming to Little Garden, but the aura they felt from the man before their eyes was completely different.

If to forcefully give an example —— it would be similar to the three of them foreigners.

Despite emitting an extraordinary existence and pressure, this man’s aura perfectly belonged to human. And such a mysterious man actually walked down from the bull chariot which held divinity. It was no wonder those two was surprised.

Towards the man who did not reply to Izayoi's question and announced that he was a sponsor, Asuka asked.

"I apologize for my rudeness, may I know how to address you? Or would hit and run criminal be a better way to call you?"

"Name? —— Ah ah, that's true. Reincarnating as a man would need a new name."

So troublesome, the man grumbled while smoking. To think of a new name, meaning to tell them an alias. And he was too carefree to start thinking one now.

But while thinking of a new name, the man showed a serious expression.

"Named as In… No no, following the original would not be good. Then change to Mikado… Ah ah, like this the divinity would not drop too much. And it is in line with my current duty. Alright, just like this."

"——….?"

Ara, Kudou Asuka seemed to have noticed something.

It might be her imagination, but she felt that she heard this man's name somewhere. Although forgotten, but her brain remembered vaguely an important promise with the owner of this voice. But as she could not remember when and what the promise was, she tilted her head.

On the other hand, the man scratched his head and entered a deep thought, after countless confirmation and trial, confidently spoke his alias.

"OK… I have decided! My name is Mikado —— right, Mikado Tokuteru!"

"—— Wha?"

Everyone was stunned together. Mikado Tokuteru was satisfied from their reaction and continued.

"The Community I belong to is「Tōiriten」
[9] which connected to the Upper Floor. As a representative of the「Twelve Devas」, I have come to aid the development of「Spirit Train」!"

Announcing the perfect alias that contained his pride, In —— No, Mikado Tokuteru, that behavior, that alias, and the deplorable dispositions of the Kuro Usagi series surrounding his body.

Gathering so many deductive clues and still not seeing through his identity, in Little Garden such a person should not exist.

"Oi, Chibi nekomimi-sama. This guy is…"

"...Yes. That's right."

Izayoi revealed a detestable expression.

Kudou Asuka's lip twitched.

Laius opened his mouth wide from the impact under the tiles.

Porol Gundark held his head regretfully.

The four understood the identity of the one before them in their hearts.

The presence belonged to human, but he himself who wanted to hide his identity failed to hide it. More importantly, that deplorable aura which even surpassed Kuro Usagi was telling them his identity.

Yes —— This man was none other than Kuro Usagi, 「Moon Rabbit」 Main God.

Roc Demon King said, "A useless god that only do needless things."

Saurian Demon King said, "The delinquent brother of Heaven."

War God 「Twelve Devas」 leader who was one of the rulers of Little Garden.

The strongest War God (LOL) 「Indra」 was this man ——!!!

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1 Uka-no-Mitama is a deity of food and agriculture, she and Uga-no-Mitama (her masculin "twin") are identified with Inari the kami of rice, food etc. and foxes (kitsune). This lead to Myōbu which is a title given to some noblewomen, but it's also a kitsune messenger of Inari (Illustration (Wikipedia Italiano)).↩

2 Fushimi Inari-taisha is the head shrine of Inari-ōkami located in Fushimi-ku (Kyoto). It's one of the 10th head shrine in Japan,look at the illustration on Common Wikipedia.↩

3 Ochibi-sama - Izayoi's way of calling Jin Russel.↩

4 Orichalum - From the greek ὀρείχαλκος (oreíkhalkos) is a famous metal in ancient writing (most famous being in the Critias of Plato (about the Atlantis).↩

5 Yahi are the southern part of the Yana people, they were located in present-California around the Sierra Nevada They were around 400 at the beginning, they were almost all killed

during the Gold Fever. The last male died in 1916. He called himself “Ishi”, because tradition forbid Yahi to give his real name. On a side note, “Ya-” meant person (-na for the northern dialect, and -hi for the southern) and “Ishi” meant man in their language.↩

6 Suspension - In there it refers to car suspension. It has the meaning of reducing the impact, which was a metaphor to Izayoi’s speech.↩

7 Haste makes waste - An idiom referring to people that rush things will not be able to do things properly/well.↩

8 Seven Stars - a cigarette brand in Japan.↩

9 Tōiriten (忉利天) is the Jap name of trāyastriṃśa. It’s the second heaven in the Buddhist cosmology, and naturally used to call the devas who reside there. The Japanese name mean Heaven of the thirty-three, also trāyastriṃśa is an adjective formed from the number 33 trayastriṃśat.
↩

Chapter 3

Part 1

——「Mines of Raging Seas」Residential area open-air shopping district.

The open-air shopping district that was built in the middle of the canyon curved with shops along the road like a snake.

Clothes and food needless to say, there were also many decorations made by refining the ores mined from the mine.

“It has just begun developing, and there are already so many shops. It’s more lively than I thought.”

“YES! The first game held in「Mines of Raging Seas」is indeed unusually prosperous.”

Kasukabe Yō and Ayesha Ignis Fatuus, along with Kuro Usagi, were shopping for Ayesha at the open-air shopping district.

There were many hidden gems buried in this open-air shopping district, but appraisal work was not Kasukabe Yō’s specialty. She originally thought that she was still the daughter of an artist, but if she had no talent it couldn’t be helped. Hence she must enjoy the snacks along the street.

Yō pointed towards the open-air shops with sparkling eyes.

“I haven't eaten lunch due to signing up for the games, both of you also want to eat? Right?”

“YES! Kuro Usagi had only eaten pancakes, so that suggestion is welcome!”

“Although you ignored your work as a judge.”

Ayesha’s words pierced the vital of Kuro Usagi. After putting aside the battle between Yō and Griffith and eating rice crackers instead, such retribution was only natural.

Ayesha snappily expressed her amazement, and chose a clothes shop.

“I am going to buy somethings, so just wait for me around here before lunch.”

“Understood.”

“YES! Then let’s find a good shop while waiting!”

Kuro Usagi suggested with her ears stood up, then bid farewell with Ayesha.

The two started to pick a good shop in the surrounding near the clothes shop.

Ingredients obtainable from the mine was limited, but luckily there was a forest and river near here. They waited for Ayesha while eating grilled golden perch caught from the river.

When Yō finished her third one, Kuro Usagi asked Yō.

“What was the discussion Ayesha-san mentioned about? Was it regarding the Community after all?”

“I also thought so. After Jack was gone, Willa was also very depressed, it seemed that they had not even decided on the future course of action yet. She should be feeling insecure.”

Yō started eating her seventh golden perch after finishing her reply.

Kuro Usagi seemed to be satisfied after one, she voiced out her opinion while spinning the stick.

“The major force of a Community is not limited to battle power alone. Admin duty, diplomacy, workshop and others…People that displayed their talent in the respective fields were all considered Community’s major force.”

“Thinking along this line, Jack is really an all-rounded talent. Being both the Player and Host, external and internal jobs were all done properly.”

Yō closed her eyes after finishing her eighth. There were probably no other ghosts as respectable as him in this vast Little Garden.

Children loving, the pumpkin clown loved by children. Jack’s existence was not only important to「Will o’ Wisp」, but also important to「No Name」. He was also the first opponent that let Yō taste her defeat.

“In the end, Jack still ran away after winning. I was still looking for a chance to pay back the loss. I can’t repay his kindness towards me in「Underwood」like this.”

“...Yō-san.”

She owed Jack a favor. She also owed Jack a duel. And when she could not even repay one of them, he had already disappeared. That cheerful laughter could not be heard again.

Ayesha who knew Jack for an even longer time would surely have more memories. If letting her talk could reduce her pain, then no matter how much Yō would listen.

When Yō was eating her twenty-seventh golden perch, Ayesha walked out from the clothes shop.

“Yo, kept you waiting.”

“It’s nothing. We didn’t wait ——”

That long. Before Yō could finish her words, the golden perch in her hand dropped onto the

ground.

Yō blinked her eyes, her mouth agape. That surprise was no normal surprise. That impact made the glutton Yō so shocked to the degree of dropping the golden perch in her hand.

Kuro Usagi standing beside her was the same. Usamimi stood straight, very surprised.

Ayesha who walked out of the clothes shop was just that weird.

“Ugh… That’s Ayesha, right?”

“Oh. This is the first time I, Ayesha-sama is wearing a western suit. Does it suit me?”

Unlike her arrogant speech, Ayesha replied in a modest posture. From the goth twin-tail to a western suit and tie, the childish appearance vanished after she let her long and straight azure hair down, they could even feel a little mature atmosphere.

Yō was grumbling in her heart, she didn’t expect such a drastic change just from changing the attire.

She had always worn a goth outfit regardless of participating in Gift Games in faraway places or shopping, what exactly caused her change of heart now?

Sensing such stares, Ayesha’s face tensed and sighed.

“...Mah, I also expected this reaction. Since I had been wearing my Game attire all the time before you. Once I think that it was my last time wearing it, I also have some deep feelings.”

“Last time… eh, eh?”

Yō was confused from the situation. On the other hand, Kuro Usagi drew a cold breath after sensing the reason.

“Ayesha-san. Don’t tell me you are retiring, not participating anymore?”

“Re, retire!?”

“That’s right. Gift Game player Ayesha Ignis Fatuus will retire now. I will be taking over as the Community strategist and handle operation duties, yoroshiku!”

Ayesha straightened her body and tightened her tie. Yō was just getting more panicked.

“Op, operation… That, that is saying, becoming the Host? Just changing the side but still participating in games.”

“How is that possible. In Gift Games, it is much more difficult to be the Host than the Player.”

“YES! If one wants to live as a Game Host, one must have big facilities and Gifts that can

actually bring in profit, and also talents. The「Will o' Wisp」now can't even muster the funds for hosting Gift Games."

It was rare for Kuro Usagi to use such harsh words.

Yō was the opposite, still maintaining her stunned look. She could not understand why she suddenly talked about this matter. Also, wasn't she just participating in a Gift Game awhile ago?

"Do, don't tell me… it, it's my fault? Because I won with that kind of method, you."

"Not-a-chance! I told you not to overthink it! Retiring is something I decided long ago. I will stop being a player if I didn't obtain some achievement in this game. So… that, how to put it. Losing to Yō is a good thing in a way. It helped me to confirm my resolve. You are indeed very strong."

Papa, Ayesha slapped Yō's shoulder, showing a cheerful attitude.

Kuro Usagi observed Ayesha with a subtle expression, calmly asked.

"...Ayesha-san. If you are willing, can you tell us the real story?"

"It can't be considered some secret… Mah, just a common story. I can't support the Community even if I am a player. —— I, have no talent."

“Tha, that kind of thing!”

“Yō-san, please be quiet.”

Kuro Usagi stopped Yō. She believed that they should only listen right now. A never seen before seriousness was shown in Ayesha’s eyes. Retire, it must have needed a very strong will.

Ayesha sat down on the nearby bench, looked up to the sky far away.

Her long azure hair swayed along with the wind from the mountain, mumbled softly as if speaking to herself.

“First-rate players that left countless achievements, were all famous characters in Little Garden. Standing atop the phantom stage, crossing the almost impossible trials, solving harsh and difficult mysteries. I have seen many Gift Games that are filled with the passion of adults and admiration of children… I myself, had a Gift Game I admired. Despite being so

pitiful but still remaining as a Player was because of this.”

This matter, Kuro Usagi had also mentioned before.

Children in Little Garden all grew up admiring the flag of their Communities.

They held the wish of “Becoming an adult worthy of that flag” in their hearts, looked at the Community Players with admiration.

“...You two, have you seen the Harvest Festival of「Onihime」Alliance?”

“「Onihime」Alliance?”

“That’s the North Floor「Floor Master」. My usamimi heard that it was a Community that gathered six Oriental Onihimes.”

“Yes, it’s that Community. They held the oriental Harvest Festival two times a year with「Killing Palace」building as its center. Although that was the first Gift Game I witnessed, it was a very lively festival!”

Ayesha opened her hands, releasing a childish brilliance on her face.

That was a bright smile Yō had never seen before. Encompassing all the envy and admiration, Ayesha recalled the scenery of the Harvest Festival.

“The fireworks made from foxfire decorated the night sky, cauldrons full of tonics filled the castle ground! Eight dragons used wine barrels as bet on the feast, fought again and again regardless of day or night! Myōbus contributed sprout tea harvested from their Communities, competing for the best tea brewer of the year! That kind of festival lasted for seven days and seven nights...at the finale of the festival, six bright flags fluttered on top of the building. Even recalling it now is really...really, like a Game from dreams.“

The way she described with her sparkling eyes, seemed as if she was a little girl lost in a fantasy world.

But this could not be helped.

Since she was summoned to Little Garden together with Jack, then Ayesha had only stayed in Little Garden for just three years.

A western girl like her participating in Games held by oriental culture「Onihime」Alliance was even more so, foreign culture in Little Garden must surely be stunning.

“—— I, strongly prayed. I can also stand on such a stage. Hence I begged Willa nee-san and Jack-san, to also let me participate in Gift Games...That azure dress, was also made personally by Jack after saying ‘Yahohoho! Since you will be participating in Gift Game, then we must prepare a suitable dress.’”

“...So, so that’s it.”

Yō chimed in, at the same time she felt some impact. Because from Ayesha's tone, she felt how important she had viewed the Player's role.

She heard about it in the past, 「Will o' Wisp」 made a living as a Host mainly.

Then crossing the long distance to participate in 「Rise of the Fire Dragon」 festival and 「Underwood」, must be from Jack's kindness, wanting to let Ayesha accumulate more experience.

Accumulating achievements bit by bit in a Community that could not be considered well-off, hoping that one day she could achieve something big, she should have held onto such a wish.

—— Then why?

Retiring at this point of time, Yō could not understand.

"...Ayesha. Since you held onto such a strong thought, you should not retire. Even if it is for the sake of not wasting the days spent with Jack."

"But like that, the children at my home will not have enough to eat."

Using a sharp tone that seemed to deny any objection, Ayesha immediately replied.

Yō was overwhelmed by her pressure, reluctantly swallowed back her argument. In her gaze, a passion stronger than any expression she showed when she was participating in games lit brightly.

"—— Jack-san, is no longer here. He sacrificed himself under the azure flame flag. I must take action as the second-in-hand of the organization. My dream has —— ended."

As a first-rate Player, carving her name in this Little Garden that gathered all kinds of gods and deities, this was a dream anyone in this world would have. But she gave up on it.

For the sake of continuing the new journey, Ayesha let her azure hair down, and changed into a western suit.

"...I say, Kuro Usagi. Don't you also understand? How tedious it is to feed a few dozen children in this Little Garden."

"YES. In the three years before summoning Yō-san, Izayoi-san and co, it was really the most tedious period in my 200 years of life."

"I thought so too. We still have Willa nee-san, so the face as a Player is saved, but you had to work hard in the situation without any strong players. Your situation can be considered harsher."

"No no. Kuro Usagi still have the judge role under Shiroyasha-sama's care, so it's still fine in terms of food supply."

Really? The two giggled at each other. That was a smile only those determined to change from the dependent to the depended.

Ayesha stared at Yō face to face, tightly held her hand, passed on her dream to her.

“—— I will protect 「Will o’ Wisp」. Using methods even a useless person like me can use to protect. So, Yō. You must shine brilliantly as a first-rate Player on the stage. Like this, our[1] once only victory, can eventually be boasted to the children.”

The victory obtained with Jack in the 「Rise of the Fire Dragon」 festival.

She hoped that that victory could let the children hold a new admiration.

Yō’s eyes moistened, she held Ayesha’s hands back with strength.

“...Understood. I will promise with you. I… won’t lose to anyone anymore.”

“Ohoh, such daring words!”

“YES! Can I take it as a victory declaration of this 「Adamantine Forge」Gift Game?”

The serious atmosphere vanished in an instant, Ayesha and Kuro Usagi let out an evil smile.

In the finals of 「Adamantine Forge」, there were strong participants such as Izayoi and Asuka in the lead. She would not speak of victory easily as long as she knew their true strength.

But Yō grinned fearlessly.

“No. No matter who is my opponent I won’t lose. Even if that’s —— Izayoi and Asuka.”

“Hoh…!?”

“Hei…!?”

The two were speechless. Because they didn’t expect her to answer like that.

Yō did not regret her arrogance, but instead showed a relaxed and joyful expression. Although it was spoken in reflex, she must have set her goal on this.

She tightened her grips, raised her fist towards the sky.

“Be it Izayoi or Asuka, I won’t lose. En, since I have decided so I must make my plan right now. I want to look around and see if there is a suitable Gift to be used in the mine, you two can accompany me!”

“Uu, oi! Are you serious!?”

“Kuro, Kuro Usagi must return immediately to prepare for the next preliminary ——!!!”

Kuro Usagi straightened her usamimi to complain, but nobody present could stop Yō who had started her action. Yō held Ayesha's hand and Kuro Usagi's usamimi tightly and marched forward.

Although part of the reason was the promise with Ayesha, she also noticed that after her rapid growth, she had always wanted to test herself.

Sakamaki Izayoi, Kudou Asuka, Kasukabe Yō.

The three of them right now —— Who is the strongest?

Part 2

—— Right now, Izayoi on the other hand.

"Hei!"

"Guaaaaahhhhh I got beateeeeennnn!"

Participants let out wails and got planted into the bedrock. The participants that were rooted into the bedrock from head to body obviously could not continue the Game.

He felt that "using violence to win goes against the motto of the Game" and rejected this method, but picking a fight against him was another matter.

At the start he wanted to find an opponent related to earth, deciding a victor with a fair competition in mining, hence he held the pickaxe and started digging with vigor, but nearing the end of the preliminary, more and more participants started to assault others and rob the ores. Izayoi, who was at the top few, was also targeted, resulting in Izayoi sending them flying.

"—— Seriously. I never imagined that there will be so many fools to start robbing each other in a mining game. It seems like I must reconsider the game rules."

Izayoi dusted his clothes. The objectives of the preliminary and main competition of this Gift Game were different.

The objective of the preliminary was to attract large number of miners. Just by participating in mining would be rewarded with gold coins, this was for the sake of gathering many miners.

In the main competition, weapons made from「Diamond Iron」was lent out. The objective was to let the strong display the weapon capabilities, hence promoting the new products at the same time. Also letting the participants that passed through the preliminaries confirm the usefulness of the weapons, helping to clarify the weapon capabilities.

(The reason the act of robbing is tolerated in the preliminaries, is to make it easier for the strong ones to advance to the main competition… But this seems to have a reverse effect. If

the important miners got scared and won't dare to participate again, the Game cannot continue.)

Since the goal was scheduled festival, there was a need to consider the Game balance, securing a stable source of participants. The way of the Host was really deep, Izayoi crossed his arms and laughed.

At the same time, the gong signifying the end of the game rang. Fox girl Lily, who was substituting for the absent Kuro Usagi, announced the end of the game with a mic.

"F, Group F preliminary ends here! The one who mined the most is —— Ugh, that, Tokuteru-sama! Please!"

"Oh. The most should be Sakamaki Izayoi."

"Gre, Great! Izayoi-sama made it through the preliminary!"

Lily's fox ears stood up and she waved at Izayoi.

Izayoi replied with a bitter smile.

(But that guy. He also possess「Judge Master」authority like Kuro Usagi.)

In —— No, Mikado Tokuteru willing to cover for Kuro Usagi is a good thing, but we cannot casually ask him to help, hence Lily was sent as his assistant to take up the judging role together.

Despite the person himself wanting to hide his identity, he failed to hide it at all.

If his identity was leaked it would cause a commotion, so Lily had to work hard by herself.

Izayoi rotated his shoulder. Just as he left the venue, Porol came to service him with a nervous expression.

"Good work, master Izayoi. A complete victory."

"Losing in the preliminary is too disgraceful after all. —— Although that's what I want to say, truthfully speaking I am probably lucky. If nobody came to pick a fight I still don't know if I could win. I was only helped by the unbalanced part of the Game."

Earth spirit and dwarves races that specialized in mining should not be few. Despite Izayoi possessing extraordinary physical strength, he could only fight with a single pickaxe.

If simply competing in appraising the location where the most「Diamond Iron」was, he would probably be in a difficult fight.

"Hmm… That's quite unexpected. I thought that brother's motto is 'No matter what I must win!'"

“Of course I want to win. But, only a landslide victory by abiding to the rules and objectives of the Game is considered to be a first-rate Player. Because in the end, Game is only a communication tool. The actual use is to determine the winner and loser.”

Of course, there were exceptions. For example games that would affect the Community’s survival if lost, he must win regardless of the methods. Izayoi thought, a first-rate Gamer was not talking about those who had no loss record, but used to praise those who would never lose when facing a fight that could not afford to be lost.

In this case, Izayoi never thought about obtaining a landslide victory. If he had been fully prepared with Gifts that were useful for mining, there would probably be a decisive difference between him and the other participants.

The reason he did not do so was not arrogance, but the Host purposely livening the place. If Izayoi was seriously aiming for the win, it might very well be possible to scare the other participants off from coming again.

“Mining Game is just one part of the investment game we are progressing with. It would only be boring if I get serious. —— Isn’t that right?”

“That’s true… This is unexpected, I thought that brother is not someone who care about it.”

“Depending on the situation and time. Since I do things based on my mood.”

Izayoi yawned after finishing. Is that really true? Porol tilted his head.

—— But speaking truthfully, this was unlike Izayoi’s style.

At least the Izayoi that was just summoned to Little Garden would not choose the method to win nor hesitate to win. Although he made an excuse that seemed to justify his actions, the act of making an excuse was already something he would not do. Izayoi in the past would not speak much, throwing a ‘Because it would be boring’ and finished.

In that case, the only reason he could think of was only one.

Simply speaking, he was not passionate about the Game.

“...Moody period?”

“Eh?”

“No, nothing, do you have any plan later?”

“I am thinking of how to provide reception for Tokuteru. He is still a sponsor, so we must make him happy. The preparation is left to Luilui and Gry now.”

Izayoi showed a bitter smile at this moment. Gry referred to the gryphon Gry. Although using Therianthropy Technique, he might be able to handle the welcoming job, but he was still not used to the customs of humanoid beings. He walked around naked in the Community

ground just not long ago, and angered the girl group. They could not estimate how unprecedented Mikado Tokuteru was, but they couldn't let a man who would be naked on the first meeting to do the job.

Just as Izayoi began to think of some strategies, Porol shook his head and smiled.

"Ah, Izayoi brother. I probably know what you are worrying about, why don't you leave it to me. It won't develop into the situation you imagined."

"Hoh? Is there a way to restrain that stripping maniac?"

"It's the opposite. Don't think of a way to stop him, but provide a place where stripping is fine. Why don't brother also join in. I think it can let you relax."

...Uhuh, Izayoi observed Porol while holding his chin.

Izayoi definitely did not rate him poorly, but to have predicted his thoughts and actions, it seems that he must re evaluate him. This youth named Porol was even talented than Izayoi thought.

He heard that in the alliance meeting at「Underwood」back then, he lost to Jin Russel. It might be because of that, Izayoi unconsciously looked down on Porol.

"En. How should I put it, it's that. You obviously have such a brilliant mind and way of words, why did you lose to our Chibi-sama?"

"Ah ah um?...Ah ah, talking about the alliance formation matter. Aiya, I really gained a lot from that time. The reason I lost was because of the cards I held and lack of information, so this time I put in a lot more effort, negotiating only after preparing irrebuttable contents."

Porol pushed his spectacles and grinned.

Knowing to turn failure into experience at the age of 11 was really unsettling, but he indeed possessed the ability to boast it. This point must be evaluated frankly.

This youth, would become an irreplaceable ally of「No Name」.

"So reliable. Then I will leave the troublesome matter in the hands of my ally, let me also enjoy the reception."

"Oi oi brother. You belong to the welcoming side."

"What, it's fine to let me go help? I don't mind, but I would only use my style to service the other party."

"...No, leave the reception to us, brother go enjoy yourself."

Izayoi laughed heartily, Porol could only laugh bitterly.

Afterwards, after discussing the hotel address for the reception, the two parted. Although Izayoi did not have much expectation, he suddenly remembered the origin of Indra.

—— Indra was originally an evil God of「Zoroastrianism」[2].

Since this was the case, he needed to ask him some matters.

—— Mah, though asking won't change anything.

Despite not expecting anything, it might be possible to bring some moisture to his withered heart. If he was a real God, he could also give him a divine prophecy. Izayoi also carried achievements equivalent to it after all.

Even so, if it could not resolve his withered state ——

(Then at that time… I would let the strongest War God-sama to worry for me.)

Holding his fist alone amongst the crowd.

Izayoi showed a trace of smile, walked towards the hotel Mikado Tokuteru resided in.

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1 Our here refers to Ayesha and Jack.↩

2 OK, this topic is a bit complicated to explain. In Zoroastrianism you have an opposition between the "good" Yazata (and Ahuras) and the "bad" Daeva. If you know a bit of Hinduism you can see it's actually the opposite (Deva vs. Asura) there. It's complicated because you only see Vedic-deities as "enemies" in the Vendidad (Avesta: Vî-Daêvô-Dāta : given against the Daevas) which wasn't written by Zoroaster himself. In the oldest text wrote by Zoroaster (Yasna) it's not the case. FYI Indra appear in Vendidad 10.09.↩

Chapter 4

Part 1

——「Mines of Raging Seas」Hot spring town hotel.

In the center of the mining town where natural hot springs spewed out, an area was developed for sightseeing. The largest building amongst them, the hotel that highly raised the "Twin Goddess facing each other" –「Thousand Eyes」flag.

The hotel that was being built from the refined ores mined from the mine was not luxurious enough yet, but it had already reserved a very large piece of land, and planned to become the landmark after completion. It was probably preparing for hosting some crafting Gift Games now.

By then the middle hall and outer appearance of the hotel would become splendorous immediately.

As an early investment they only bought the land. However「No Name」had also received a hefty sum because of that, so both sides profited.

Despite not having a name yet, it wouldn't be long when the day tourists use this hotel as the center of their trip would not be long.

Izayoi was led by the shop assistant as he advanced towards「Thousand Eyes」hotel's natural hot spring. Izayoi teased the shop assistant while laughing for meeting her after quite some time.

"Yo, long time no see. Are you doing well in the new place?"

"No need to worry. I did not receive the education to lower my hospitality after changing location."

"That's good. Speaking of which, I heard that you have been promoted from shop assistant to shop owner?"

"...Still as rude as ever. The reason I was assigned as Shiroyasha-sama's assistant, was because I had received education for being a shop owner. So it could not be considered a promotion."

The female shop assistant —— correction, female shop owner (temporary) hurriedly ended the topic.

According to rumors, she seemed to have transferred from the East Floor shop to North Floor new shop.「Thousand Eyes」opened many new shops to help with North Floor's recovery, it was decided that she would be in charge of one of the shops.

Towards her that was promoted to female shop owner (temporary), Izayoi congratulated

her with a carefree smile.

“Mah, congratulations anyway. With this a new path within 「No Name」 and 「Thousand Eyes」 opened. Let’s make a name for ourselves following this pace.”

“I am not interested in making a name for myself, but if it helps with the income of the shop, my Community’s name will probably rise further. If you want to be a good customer, then bring some profitable business over.”

She calmly rebutted Izayoi’s teasing. She had always rejected them with “「No Name」is not welcomed”, but they were already familiar now.

That was because of the previous battle achievement was recognized by 「Thousand Eyes」, they finally put 「No Name」 into their customer list.

This meant that the humongous Community 「Thousand Eyes」 had ensured their identity in Little Garden. There would probably be nobody that would call them 「No Name」 with a nameless meaning.

“That said, but why would the North Floor shop owner go to the East Floor?”

“As this time is for reception of Indra-sama, so as an acquaintance I was assigned here. After all that person will become a big pervert after getting drunk and has many strange fetishes, there must be someone to hold his reigns.”

“Eh? You are his acquaintance?”

“Umu. We met once when 「Heaven Army」 was holding a meeting in my shop, that guy once went after me.”

Female shop owner(temporary) spoke without a change in her expression, Izayoi shrugged his shoulders in amazement.

“Laying his hands even on an iron lady such as you, as expected of the God of perverts.”

“That’s right. But, I think once that guy gets drunk and wasted, it doesn’t matter who it is… Then, what comes afterwards is the problem. After meeting the similarly drunk Shiroyasha-sama, following Shiroyasha’s sentence ‘What is the meaning of laying your hands on my people!!!’, the two of them started quarreling. Since then, he seemed to be unable to handle me, Indra-sama did not even make eye contact with me.”

Hng hng, female shop owner (temporary) puffed out her chest. This might also be a reason she treated Kuro Usagi with a strict attitude.

Although he wanted to hear about the result of the quarrel between the War God and the Sun God, he felt that it would make her mood worse, so he gave up.

“But 「Thousand Eyes」 has a really wide influence, even need to take care of 「Heaven

Army」meetings.”

“You might as well say that only our Community can handle this task. Since there isn’t any other Communities that don’t belong to「Heaven Army」while at the same remain neutral.”

“Is that so?”

“En. Speaking of which, do you know the formal name of「Heaven Army」?”

Izayoi thought for a while, then shook his head. Although Izayoi had never heard about the formal name, he could more or less sense the true face of「Heaven Army」.

「Heaven Army」—— known as the Community Alliance with the strongest war gods gathered. It was said that not only Buddha, even Olympians and Angels and other various races were included.

In the world Izayoi was from, there existed a similar concept.

That name was「Deva」.

It referred to various gods in「Indian Pantheon」, the main god in「Greek Pantheon」, the sole god in「Old Testament」, evil god in「Zoroastrianism」. This was「Deva」.

It was probably named「Heaven Army」after「Slavic Pantheon」and「Celtic Pantheon」joined.

“Originally,「Heaven Army」was a mixed Pantheon group that was formed to resist Dystopia. After that responsibility was over it was managed by「Twelve Devas」that originally belonged to「Heaven」, Olympian and Angels would only sortie if they could not make a move...This is the structure of the current「Heaven Army」.”

“Haha. Although I have heard many revelations regarding Dystopia, but such an exaggerated organization was created to defeat a single Demon Lord.”

“I also thought so. But even so they were at deadlock, the Demon Lord did live up to its name. —— But, you had also defeated a Demon Lord with a similar calibre, your luck is really fearsome.”

Female shop owner (temporary) giggled sarcastically. It was a roundabout way of saying “It was just a coincidence that you defeated the Demon Lord”.

But Izayoi did not deny that sarcasm, and received it with a smile.

“Ah ah, I also thought so.”

“Being self-aware is good. Please remember it to heart. —— We’re here.”

They reached a room deep in the hotel.

The entrance of the natural hot spring hung a “Reserved” plate.

That’s how it was, if it’s here even the stripping maniac would be able to provide reception without any problem. This was very thoughtful.

Izayoi bid farewell to the female shop owner (temporary) after taking the wooden bucket and towel.

At this moment, she left a sentence.

“But —— regardless of the heroism, defeating Great Demon Lords was closely related to fortune since ancient times. So I feel that you do not need to suspect your victory, Izayoi-sama.”

Hearing his name called, Izayoi sent the female shop owner (temporary) off with surprised eyes.

Watching her upright leaving figure closely, Izayoi shrugged his shoulders and commented.

“...I really lost to her. Didn’t think that my name would be called for the first time, and seeing through me at the same time.”

He just got lectured. And the other side ran away right after winning. He totally lost his face.

Izayoi thought that he would ask for her name card next time they meet, then flipped up the curtain of the male bathhouse.

Part 2

——「Thousand Eyes」hotel famous「Sukunabikona Hot Spring」.

Izayoi took off his clothes, wound the towel around his waist, picked up the wooden bucket with one hand and walked into the bathhouse.

Once he opened the door, Izayoi let out an exclamation.

“Oh oh, this is excellent.”

Cypress wood fragrance mixed in with the hot air stimulated his nose.

Just entering from the door, it created a hallucination of being lost in the forest.

As an open air bath, it was still covered in steam, the reason was because of the many walls in its structure. Taking away the field of sight in an instant, inhaling the hot air which carried cypress wood fragrance, the hallucination of being lost in the forest was born.

Walking into the bathhouse covered by marble, he randomly noticed the big tree used as a decoration.

That tree seemed to be cut from a branch of the giant water tree in「Underwood」and transplanted over, it not only complemented the scenery of the bathhouse, the warm water overflowed from the top of the tree trunk also transformed into a mini waterfall.

Just closing his eyes, the sound of flowing water and falling water chimed together, relieving his body and heart.

Sight, hearing, even smell received the highest satisfaction up to now. The design was also meticulous. Despite being slightly frustrated, it was as expected of the prestigious「Thousand Eyes」Community.

Once the sense of touch was satisfied by the most important hot spring, then he would have no complaints.

After Izayoi used the spring water to wash away the dust stuck onto his body during the mine Gift Game, he stretched his leg into the long awaited hot spring.

At this moment, a loud voice came from the other side of the steam.

“Good — Good good good, quite hardworking! You can drink more than you look, young man of Greece! Hurry up, the service girls also clap your hands!”

“Iya — So impressive♪”

“The young man of Greece is so impressive♪”

“Greece…Ugh, what was the name?”

“So forgetful. It’s the young leader Lugii-sama from「Perseus」.”

“...Uppu”

Iya — Lugii-sama is so great!

—— The screams of girls called over for the sake of reception echoed throughout the bathhouse. There was only a thick towel covering the skin of the girls, such generosity.

Luilui whose name was mistaken until only the “Lu” was correct, seemed to be so drunk he didn’t even have the energy to correct it.

The slim him could be considered very hardworking.

Hot spring, women, good wine, although it was a common reception in the Outer World, it was a mismatch against the quiet bathhouse, the good mood Izayoi had was swept away, he hung his shoulder disgustingly. He was a healthy seventeen-year-old, so he did not dislike playing with flowers. It could be said he loved it. But he hoped to choose the type of girls based on time place situation.

Since the bathhouse emitted a forest atmosphere, and was able to satisfy all five senses,

this was enough enjoyment, so in this situation, the quiet type of girls that could show off the other party's manliness should be chosen to serve.

Although the nightclub girls from Kabukichō[1] were not bad, the more suitable choice was no doubt the former. Since it was a quiet bathhouse, wouldn't it be enough to just smile gently and sip a few cups?

(Really. That nekomimi ochibi didn't study well on this part huh.)

He must give him a good lecture later on, Izayoi thought as such, and added one into his reflection list. Next time when he visits the red-light district, the expense would be tabbed under「Six Scars」then.

As Izayoi was dazing at the door entrance, another man noticed him, Gry talked to him.

"Oh oh, Izayoi has come. Don't just stand there, come over. You want a drink?"

"Alright. Gry also seems to enjoy it?"

"En. Rum is good, but this sake is also not bad."

The gryphon Gry that transformed into human with Therianthropy Technique answered while holding a one litre bottle in one hand.

He re-evaluated his appearance, he looked like a tall and sturdy handsome man. Showing a hearty and noble smile was exactly the royal attitude. If he kept quiet and groom up, he would probably attract many women.

That's why it was such a pity when he walked around in just a T-shirt and shorts. It was just like straw hiding the pearl.

(There is such a good man but they didn't even look at him, it seems that these women are all business-minded.)

He changed his evaluation towards those servicing girls.

To avoid being detected by Mikado Tokuteru, Izayoi sat next to Gry, shook his head in grief.

"However, even though it's Shuchinikurin[2], isn't there any better place to hold the feast? The objective of hot spring hotel is to relax right?"

"I say, Izayoi. You just spoke something shallow. The usage of land varies. Some Hippocamp and Unicorn chose to build their nest in far away deep mountain hot springs due to their preferences. Compared to this, having a grand feast in a hot spring hotel is nothing strange."

The value of land and choice varied from people to people. You could just hold a feast based on your own preference, the generous king of beast explained this way.

Izayoi also nodded in agreement and held up his cup. Gry poured wine without a word.

Gulping down the filled cup in one mouthful, the taste of sake lingered in his chest.

The sake should have been delivered immediately after pouring into the bottle from a newly opened barrel. The fragrance was stronger than those sold in the market.

Including sense of taste, all his five senses were satisfied, Izayoi soaked in the hot spring with a relaxed body.

“And then? It seems to be quite lively, are they playing a game?”

“Umu. Drinking a bottle, Mikado-dono started playing a game of telling bravery tales. Laus-dono lost after the third one.”

“Oh? Laius lasted quite long. Or rather, he doesn’t intend to hide his Divinity at all, huh. Then, which bravery tale was it? The duel against the Sun God? The war against the Asura clan?”

“Those are already finished. Right now he is telling the story of conquering「Seven Great Demon Lords」.”

Izayoi shook his cup, showing a bitter face.

“...That topic is dangerous enough. Absolutely don’t let Kouryuu or Karyou-chan hear it. Speaking of which, do they know who is Mikado Tokuteru?”

“How could they know? To them the Buddha is their nemesis. If they know Mikado-dono appears at the Lower Floor ——”

“No, the「Seven Great Sages」sworn siblings already know.”

The two looked towards the voice. What they saw was Mikado Tokuteru with a red face standing before them.

Izayoi watched him in shocked.

It seemed to be an easily approachable behavior in a glance, but Izayoi did not let his guard down. Ultimately, he did not understand the reason for this man to come down to Lower Floor.

——「War God」Indra. Despite the many Military Gods, if asked who was the strongest and most famous, asking a thousand people and all would say his name. He was called Thunder God, War God, Hero God, King of Gods, about one third of the oldest Indian sacred text,「Rigveda」[3], was praising him. Although later on he converted to Buddhism, most people knew about his Buddha God side better, his spirit status could rival Greek Chief God and the Sole God who were the most ancient gods.

If this man was not a double, but the real Indra, then it was hard to think that he just came for the reception. Indra was a main god that possessed such strong authority and power.

(.....)

—— A god that needed to add three “super” in the title like him.

To actually fool around in the hot spring, letting nightclub girls to service him, the behavior that was like an evil boss trying to fuddle the new employee of a rival company, what exactly was the case?

(...No, thinking carefully, Indra from the legend was such a useless god. An alcoholic and womanizer, even being criticized as “doing only things that did not require him to move”.)

Izayoi lowered his evaluation of Indra in his head.

Tokuteru seemed not to notice anything, one hand holding the bottle, one hand wiping the corner of his mouth, fearlessly laughed.

“What is it? If there is something just ask me straight. Don’t need to be polite because I am the sponsor. It’s a naked feast right now. No need for formalities!”

“Oh oh, much obliged.”

Gry walked to the front as if protecting Izayoi. Even if formalities were not needed, Izayoi had that kind of personality. He was worried if the other side would get angry.

“I heard about the「Seven Great Demon Lords」conquering story just now, but the current East「Floor Master」as you know, is the「Great Sage who Devastate Seas」who had fought against you. So my humble self is thinking if the other side will come and provoke you.”

“Ah, it’s about this. Mah, although there were some quarrels in the past, I have met the sworn siblings of the Sage[4]. They agreed to the「Spirit Train」matter based on this foundation. So there is nothing to worry.”

“...Heh? You managed to meet that Buddha-hating Karyou-chan so easily.”

Izayoi commented behind Gry. Gry used his eyes to warn Izayoi to have some self-control, but Tokuteru continued without minding it at all.

“How can it be so simple. Putting aside the grandson of Yellow Dragon, Garuda princess almost killed me after meeting. She didn’t change at all after so many year, that tomboy princess.”

“...Almost killed? You?”

“Yeah. After all the current me is in the state that will be blown away easily. Some time ago, I unreasonably saved my follower, and my spirit status was exhausted as a result. Thanks to that, I tasted five near-death experiences before coming here. Aiya, being popular is so exhausting.”

Huhuhu, the drunk Mikado Tokuteru laughed.

However, Izayoi opened his eyes wide, spoke with surprise.

“Saving the follower… could it be?”

“But that kind of thing isn’t important. Since I was destined to descend to the Outer World and reincarnate as a human. —— Then getting back to the main topic, if「Queen Halloween」and「Seven Great Sages」did not help in the recent war, we probably could not have won. Queen, with Saurian Demon Lord and Roc Demon Lord that rushed over to help, Shuten Dōji[5] and Bull Demon Lord that helped to repel the clones. I plan to provide rewards worthy of their names.”

“...Fumu. But would that Buddha-hating Karyou-chan honestly receive it?”

“Probably will. Because I indicated my intention to reward her from the start. As long as I say that we will release the souls of her sworn siblings that was imprisoned in hell, she would receive it no matter how reluctant she is.”

Mikado Tokuteru’s words caused an uproar to the people present.

Although he just finished talking about「War of Seven Sages」tale, the fact that he just offered the negotiations that was like a plea bargaining for Buddhism was met with a shock.

No matter what, the other side were Demon Lords. Once they were released into the world, they would become natural disaster level monsters. If it was about releasing them from hell, it would definitely raise objection.

Worse comes to worse, it would very likely ignite another「War of Seven Sages」.

“...Hah. That is such a generous treatment. You have thought about the what if right?”

“Do you mean, when history repeats itself?”

“Ah ah. I am unsure about Kōryū, but doesn’t Karyō hate it to the bones? Won’t Little Garden fall into chaos again?”

“It should not happen. That time their objective was to save「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」. And they had accomplished their objective. Although the Garuda tomboy princess is slightly dangerous...Well, when the time comes just let「Twelve Devas」run an errand. No need to worry.”

Mikado Tokuteru sipped his cup, happily letting himself be drunk. Daring to say “There is no problem when I’m here” in a roundabout way, it seems that he was indeed the War God.

“Hmm. I don’t hate big words, but let me witness how「Twelve Devas」can be useful.”

“Hahaha! That really poked my sore spot, you bastard!”

“Don’t try to muddle through. Didn’t you guys think about defeating Aži Dakāha?”

Izayoi strengthened his tone and asked. It was a rare sarcastic comment from him, but it was unexpectedly effective.

Mikado Tokuteru reined in his emotion, shook his head in denial.

“Putting aside the past, I have never considered it for even a bit now.”

“...What did you say?”

“He became a monster for the sake of pioneering the future of humanity, shouldering the sins of humans on his shoulders alone. Hence humans had the obligation to defeat him. — Hmph, shouldn’t you who fought him be clear? In that countless years, always hoping for the moment that a brave human would defeat him.”

Hearing Indra’s words, Izayoi could not help but started to think. That wish should have only been known to Izayoi and Jack who fought with Aži Dakāha with their lives on the line.

“You...fought with him?”

“Yeah. Because before that guy became the「Last Embryo」, I am the one who sealed him.”

It’s not something I want to do again, Mikado Tokuteru cursed. That intimate tone, was probably because they were both born from the pus of the world.

“...Hmm. That is saying, the first one to beat that guy in「Zoroastrianism」is...”

“Ah ah, that was the time when I just descended as a human. My spirit status was stronger than now. There was a saying, Vritra’s extermination in the Indian pantheon had the same origin as Aži Dakāha’s extermination, hence it was more or less related, but it is another matter when I, who was involved, talk about it. At that time Vritra was definitely stronger by a lot.”[6]

Eh, Izayoi let out an unexpected voice. Izayoi had not heard about the story regarding that. It seemed that Aži Dakāha did not possess such enormous power from the start.

Mikado Tokuteru carefreely dipped his cup into the wine barrel, pulling out a full cup of sake, and continued his bravery tales(?).

“The question is when Aži Dakāha came out from the cave of seal. He only discovered that he became unbelievably strong after another fight. The「Heaven」members back then was routed by just a single Demon Lord, that was such a shocking event.”

“...That is indeed impressive. Totally deviating from common sense.”

“That’s right. And Yamata no Orochi, Death Eye of Balor, Fenrir, Heavenly Ox[7], End of Maya, King of Ending Century also returned following that tide, we who thought ‘That won’t do, what happened here’ went to investigate, we discovered that if there was no humans who could solve the「Eschatology」[8] mystery of their spirit status, even the Almighty Floor

(Little Garden three digit) could not win. God Pantheons annihilated by that rule breaking power were countless."

It was not a metaphor, rumor had it that the oldest Demon Lord had vanquished millions of God Pantheons. It was probably a painful memory to Indra who was familiar with that past.

"「Host Master」was created for the sake of sealing that guy… Have you heard about this?"

"Mah, I more or less understand."

"Then it makes explanation easier, the key point is that. 'Giving humans all kinds of trials (Games) during the sealing period, nurturing heroes and bravery!' This matter, although it was related to the spreading of Gift Game, only Demon Lords up to year 1999 were successfully settled. We also had most of our authorities sealed by「Omnipotent Paradox」and「End Emptiness」when the Game became widespread, really, trouble comes in pairs. Mah, although using this as the chance, we opened the path towards the Full Authority Floor (Little Garden two digit)."

"...There was no one in the two digit before?"

"No, there are four. They are the originals that held the existence of Brahman[9] since birth. Their structure were completely different from us. Even now, including Gau****[10], there were about seventeen inside?"

It meant that most of the place were still empty. So many gods and buddhas were gathered, but only seventeen spots were filled in the two digits.

"Returning to topic. —— The only remaining「Last Embryo」was only Demon Lord Aži Dakāha but no matter what he could not be defeated… Understand? Even if we descend as human, we can't beat him no matter how hard we try."

The meaning held in those words, Izayoi frowned in shock.

"...That is saying, even piercing the heart also won't do?"

"That's right. The seal stakes on its heads and shoulders were applied by us「Heaven」when we descended. And we pierced his heart as well, but that guy still revived. 200 years ago Canaria and her companions also sealed him once —— Even so, it didn't kill him."

Tokuteru shook his head, stared at Izayoi with narrowed eyes.

"The three months after that, we also racked our brains. Sakamaki Izayoi. We interpreted the conditions necessary for defeating「Aži Dakāha」.

①A human hero that possess the ability to defeat Aži Dakāha's power.

②A wise person that solved the「Eschatology X」mystery contained within Aži Dakāha

③A foreign world hero who will challenge bravely knowing he can't defeat Aži Dakāha.

—— Theses three conditions, didn't you possess all of them?"

Mikado Tokuteru kept his hearty attitude, questioned Izayoi. The foreign world he referred to probably meant the Outer World Izayoi and gang lived. If Aži Dakāha's spirit status was something along the line of ending human history, then Outer World humans had the duty to resolve that themselves, that was how he thought.

Then before Izayoi's fight, they theorized something that could point out Aži Dakāha's spirit status. His meaning was that the answer was within it.

But Izayoi returned the question with a suspicious stare.

"I understand what you are trying to say, but we didn't examine into it deeply you know? At most we were suspecting if Aži Dakāha's spirit status is that of a NBCR weapon."

"...Fumu. Weapon of mass destruction huh. It's similar in direction, but contrary to my theory."

Eh?, Izayoi once again let out a voice of admiration. Simply mentioning NBCR weapon allowed him to understand the content of their theory, proving that this man was considerably reliable.

Izayoi picked up the bottle lying on the floor, spoke with an interested grin.

"Then, please allow me to listen to Indra-sama's theory."

"It's Mikado Tokuteru. I am not that handsome god."

"Ok ok. Then allow me to listen to Mikado-something-dono's theory. In your opinion, what kind of natural disaster is Aži Dakāha's...「eschatology X」?"

Fumu, he nodded exaggeratedly, received the wine poured by Izayoi, and took out a Gift Card from the wooden bucket.

"Alright. Originally this is not something that can be told to anyone living below four digits… but you are special. Little Garden and Outer World, and also regarding「Paradigm Shift」, it's better for you to know them. I will use a pseudo Geass Roll to explain from the beginning, listen carefully."

He took out a Geass Roll after finishing his speech, and started to explain slowly.

Part 3

Human history's convergent point —— known as「Paradigm Shift」, has three types.

①Convergence from discovery of supernatural phenomenon, concept.

②Convergence from country, religion etc. organization movement.

③Convergence from the ability, judgement of a single person.

In these convergences, the closer to the front the bigger the scale, the closer to the back the smaller the scale. Considering the impact to human who weaved the history, this was a matter of course. The reason humans began to walk on twos was also deduced as an influence from a major earthquake from somewhere.

Country, religion needless to say, the higher the quantity would mean the bigger the influence in the History. The king or the leader of the organization should also be counted in it. The condition for the trial (Game) to promote to divine beings was to collect 'a certain amount of faith', was because it would bring about a huge influence in history.

Compared to the first two, a single person's ability, judgement would only influence much less. The strange tale of「Jack the Ripper」was only spreaded to the extent of documentary.

But everything had an exception.

To inspire that exception, Mikado Tokuteru mentioned a Game.

— Nobunaga's Ambition —

Precondition: Oda Nobunaga was one of the huge「Paradigm Shift」in Japan's history.

Answer the following questions with this as the foundation.

Question①: Is the birth of Oda Nobunaga included in the「Paradigm Shift」?

Question②: Is the trend of Owari Province included in the「Paradigm Shift」?

Question③: Is Oda Nobunaga losing his sanity and life in Honnō-ji included in the「Paradigm Shift」.

Question④: Please explain the reason for Question③.

「Mikado Tokuteru」Seal

"...Fumu."

Izayoi pondered while holding his chin.

Using Oda Nobunaga as topic was probably for Izayoi as a Japanese to understand easier. If not Oda Nobunaga, even if the conditions were the same, he needed to accept some explanations.

In order not to shake the historical fact viewpoints of the country, Question① and Question② were inevitable phenomenon.

As for Question③, it seemed to be an inevitable phenomenon. But if it was the same as the previous two questions, then asking Question④ would be pointless.

(...He is asking me to think huh.)

Izayoi was slightly impressed at the contents of the questions. As a guidance explanation this Game was just brilliant. The intention of the question giver was easily understandable, and also induce the answerer to think.

(For example, if Oda Nobunaga survived from the Honnō-ji incident. What would happen? Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Akechi Mitsuhide would not have initiated the battle of Yamazaki[11]. Toyotomi's era would of course not happen. —— In that case, Oda Nobunaga must die in Honnō-ji?)

The history of Japan afterwards would be severely altered. The life of a king of the country was such an important event. The majority of the main active countries after the Honnō-ji incident would have huge relationships with Oda Nobunaga.

If Oda Nobunaga did not step down from the stage, it would be impossible to maintain the history —— thinking up to this point, Izayoi seemed to notice something, and looked at the questions again.

"Question③: If Oda Nobunaga losing his sanity and life in Honnō-ji was included in the

「Paradigm Shift」... Ah ah, that's what it's about. So this is how it is."

"Understand something?"

"Ah ah. The answer to Question① and Question② is YES, Question③ is NO. The death of Oda Nobunaga ≈[12] 「Paradigm Shift」is the final answer."

Oh, Mikado Tokuteru and Gry responded.

Gry tilted his head and reread the questions repeatedly.

"But, Izayoi. If that's the case won't it contradict to the history later on? I am unfamiliar with the history of your birth country, but I have also heard stories about Nobunaga the Demon Lord. If the life of such an important character was shaken, it would be problematic to the later generations, right?"

"That's correct. Oda Nobunaga was treated as a public criticism target after his death. But the death of Oda Nobunaga was a little special. This daimyō's corpse was not witnessed by anyone."

Yes... Similar to 「Pied Piper of Hamelin」, the end of Oda Nobunaga existed multiple interpretation. The theory of surviving from the Honnō-ji incident, even till now was one of the very powerful interpretation.

Not confirming the corpse = not confirming death.

“Hence the correct「Paradigm Shift」was not「Death of Oda Nobunaga」, but「Oda Nobunaga retiring from history」. Mah, although it was an abnormal case. If he survived from the Honnō-ji incident, and had not extinguished his ambition, would he be summoned to the Little Garden?”

“Correct. Nobunaga had been summoned as a Demon Lord for three times in the past, they were all ‘Nobunaga who survived from the Honnō-ji incident’. In this situation, giving Akechi Mitsuhide Gift would ensure him[13] to be killed originally, and also achieve history balance, but with this, a stronger Gift must be given to Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Hence in order to correct history, we summoned the survived Nobunaga into Little Garden… But to be summoned three times, and becoming Demon Lord three times, he was probably the only human.”

As expected of the Demon Lord of the Sixth Heaven[14]. To shock the War God to this extent, his calibre must be unusual.

“Such kinds of ‘phenomenons existing in historical facts but cannot be observed’ were also restricted to browsing content only in Little Garden. The territory that could not be observed even with「Laplace Demons」, these were called「Black Box」... Alright, next is the main topic.”

Mikado Tokuteru stood up from the bathtub, sat down at the edge.

“Sakamaki Izayoi. Regarding the spirit status of Aži Dakāha being a weapon of mass destruction, us「Heavenly Army」can decisively deny. Because the inventor of that weapon of mass destruction had already left the authority with me.”

“...Aah?”

“In this Little Garden, authorities of phenomenon or conception could be exchanged into power above the Gifts ——「Right」and be transferred. The authorities of stars were transferred around, you should have seen it right? Just consider this as something similar.”

Sun Authority and Binary Star Algol’s Authority. It was possible to transfer as a physical item. The Izayoi now had also received a Sun Authority from the youth who called himself His Highness.

“If those inventors belonged to a dedicated God Pantheon, then the God Pantheon can safekeep for them, or monitor them. Hence I can assert. NBCR weapon is unrelated to Aži Dakāha.”

—— Sakamaki Izayoi’s theory was wrong.

Hearing the words with that hidden meaning, Izayoi drew a cold breath.

“Wait a moment. Then Aži Dakāha is still alive.”

“No. He is dead. There is no mistake.”

Mikado Tokuteru’s words made Izayoi slightly worried. Then he realized, this was a wish he unconsciously held since that day, he anxiously clicked his tongue.

“Sakamaki Izayoi. For me. I believe the final two「Last Embryo」,「Aži Dakāha 」(Eschatology X) and「Demon Lord Dystopia」(Eschatology Y) were Demon Lords born from the Black Box.”

“What do you mean?”

“Those two are different from natural disasters, they are definitely man-made disasters. But after year 2000, the man-made disaster and discovery of technology of that scale actually happened two times, is it possible?”

“.....”

“Hence our conclusion is like this.「Eschatology X」and「Eschatology Y」are two sides of a coin, the core technology, concept are the same thing. And the character that caused their birth is the same person. —— However, that person’s identity is a historical mystery, could it be like this?”

Oh, Izayoi let out a surprised voice. So that’s what it meant.

Mikado Tokuteru’s explanation was as follow.

The super technology that could ignite「Eschatology X/Y」in the near future definitely exists, but “who created it” is the root question which is still an unknown.

Putting it in another way, as long as they know who created that super technology at where, it could be managed by the God Pantheon. That’s probably how he thought.

(Personally I feel that the「Third Perpetual Machine」is very suspicious… but it’s not because of building the「Third Perpetual Machine」and clearing the Game.)

Izayoi was definitely not the human that could build「Third Perpetual Machine」. He only cleared by cheating a little.

Even if he wanted to ask Coppelia, since the fight against Aži Dakāha, she had been in deep sleep as if she lost her consciousness. It might be possible that she was waiting for the “True creator” that Mikado Tokuteru mentioned to appear.

“En I understand your explanation, but. Why can I defeat Aži Dakāha? I feel that if I didn’t solve that historical mystery it would be impossible.”

“That’s it, this is what we can’t figure out. I firmly believed that you had solved the mystery in the「Black Box」, but in reality it seems you didn’t. —— Sakamaki Izayoi. Why can you defeat Aži Dakāha?”

Hearing that serious words from Mikado Tokuteru, Izayoi tsukkomi in his heart I wanted to ask you that, idiot.

“If even the Gods don’t know, how would I know. Since there is no harm in beating him, just treat it as an unexpected fortune.”

“How can this do? If we can’t determine that character, a new eschatology might happen. I even suspected that you are the inventor.”

“That’s impossible.”

“I also thought so too. But since that’s the case, the only possibility is that you indirectly ——”

Mikado Tokuteru seemed to suddenly thought of something and looked at Izayoi. His eyes were dyed with color of astonishment, as if seeing an unbelievable truth.

He bit his teeth with a bitter expression, muttered in a voice that could not be heard.

“—— Or. They met in a situation where both sides did not know?”

Mikado Tokuteru’s words did not reach anybody’s ears, only carried away by the wind.

The voice of the female receptionists, also came at this moment.

“Mikado-sama. Dinner preparation is almost ready…”

“En… Ah ah, it’s already this time huh. Call someone to carry that youth out, he is almost well-done.”

Mikado Tokuteru pointed towards Laius who was floating in the bathtub with a red face. Still soaking in the hot spring after getting drunk for a long time, it would be dangerous to let it continue.

“The rest will be saved for later, Sakamaki Izayoi. You still have other questions to ask right?”

“Hn? Can I?”

“Of course. I came for vacation this time. Chat with you after dinner.”

Mikado Tokuteru changed back to his original attitude at this time. It seemed that the God moment was already over.

Gry who was listening quietly to the two picked up Laius.

“Then let’s get out. But how about these reception girls?”

“Are you a fool, of course we are bringing them over! There isn’t many chances to play like

this in Heaven. Even I seldomly… Uh, that's right. I forgot to ask an important matter."

Important matter? The two tilted their heads.

Mikado Tokuteru stood akimbo and proudly announced.

"I can't just give rewards to Shichiten and Queen. You are the main contributor to the Demon Lord extermination. It would not be fair to not give you the corresponding reward right?"

"Reward? For me?"

"Oh oh, this is really great. Actually this man has no desires. I often thought, he should have many achievements that could be reported since coming to Little Garden."

Gry slapped Izayoi's back, laughed heartily.

Before Izayoi wanted to say something, Mikado Tokuteru interrupted first.

"That's how it is! Sakamaki Izayoi! Now let me, Indr-"

"Hn?"

"Let me, Mikado Tokuteru, directly give you your reward!"

Mikado Tokuteru repeated himself as if nothing. If he could control this shameless behavior, he could probably gain more faith as a God.

(...No. Maybe, it's better to be similar to humans.)

Although he was not the one talked about in the morning, the Indra was a God whose scandals was widespread everywhere that could be comparable to other God Pantheons. Roc Demon Lord's father Vinama Garda, was originally a God born to lower Indra's spirit status.

As a strongest God, he was a womanizer, and also an alcoholic.

Arrogant, generous, shedding tears for rabbit's death, the God that contained most emotions amongst the Gods.

Indra might be a God that contained humans' good and evil as well as emotions.

"...Uu. You seemed like you have something to say. Ok, just name it. Now most of the wishes can be granted by me, Mikado Tokuteru."

"That sure is generous."

"Oh. I had been planning to give you reward long ago anyway. Just request me for anything."

Mikado Tokuteru laughed with a drunken face. Seeing that laughter, Izayoi relaxed his body. At first he thought it was an act, but this appearance seemed to be really drunk.

Although he was thinking what's the deal with this War God, speaking too much would only bring the mood down.

"Reward… Reward huh. But I don't really have any specific things I want."

"What, you really have no desires huh. So boring. I, Ind —— No, I, Mikado Tokuteru has already announced to give you reward. Right now I can help you achieve most of your wishes you know?"

As expected of the「King of Gods」. Not a single trace of reluctance.

But even so it couldn't be helped. He wanted to find faults and provoke him before coming here, but he didn't have that mood anymore. Speaking of other wishes ——

"…Ah, right. There is one."

"En. Just name it."

Mikado Tokuteru stood akimbo and said.

Izayoi held his chin, showed an expression of being in thought.

That was a bit different from reward, but it was something Izayoi had been pursuing. He actually wanted to find it with his own power, but he had no expectations to find that Gift.

If this man was truly Indra, then it would probably be a piece of cake.

Then I won't hold back, as Izayoi finished, he pointed at Gry.

"Give this man —— Hero of Gryphon, the「Beast King Wings」that matched its name."

—— The moment his wish was spoken.

「Thousand Eyes」bathhouse, was surrounded by dazzling aurora.

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1 Kabukichō - Entertainment or red-light district. With a lot of host-clubs, love hotel, nightclubs etc. It's called the Sleepless Town.↩

2 Shuchi nikurin(酒池肉林) - Pool made from wine and forest made from meat. An idiom that refers to extreme luxury.↩

3 Rigveda : one of the 4 vedas. It's a collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns about Rigvedic deities, Indra is their chief. There are around 250 hymns dedicated to him for a total of 1028, so it's actually almost one quarter.
Indra is mostly known for having slain the serpent/dragon Vṛtra (वृत्र) a.k.a Ahi (अहि) in others Vedic texts. Note that it cognate to the Avestan aži (serpent).↩

4 Sage - Refers to Great Sage Equalling Heaven, Sun Wukong.↩

5 Shuten Dōji (litt. Drunken Demon) is one of the most famous oni (demon/ogre). He's also said to be one of the "3 great evil yōkai". He basically kidnaps, enslaves, and cannibalizes young Kyoto maidens. If you can and are interested read the article on Jstor Shuten Dōji: "Drunken Demon" (Noriko Reider), it's a translation of the actual story.↩

6 See also note 3. Vṛtra (वृत्र) is known as Ahi (अहि) in others Vedic texts. Ahi cognate to the Avestan aži (serpent). About the origin stated here, it's as always complicated. Aži Dakāha was killed by Traitaunas (Θraētaona) know as Fereydun in Middle Persian which is a human. Vṛtra was killed by Indra.
The difference is thus that in Vedic it was a God who killed the dragon, whereas in Avesta it's a Human. Hence it's probably why in Mondaiji Indra said he descended as a human to seal Aži, and as a god to kill Vṛtra.↩

7 Yamata no Orochi (八岐の大蛇, litt. 8-branched giant snake) killed by Susano-o. Balor, a.k.a Balor Birugderc (the piercing eye) he was killed by Lugh, he's said to be a cyclop, his eye could destroy everything. Fenrir a monstrous wolf son of Loki, who will kill Odin during Ragnarök, but will be killed by Odin's son Víðarr. Heanvely Ox send by the Yù Huáng (Jade Emperor) on Earth to give a message to Humanity, he mixed things and was forever banned on Earth to work with humans /// Gugalanna ("Great Bull of Heaven") was killed by Gilgamesh and Enkidu.
You must have understood that all this figures are the "enemies of Humanity".↩

8 Theology about the final events of Humanity and Earth. The "end of the world".↩

9 It'll be impossible to explain that in a note. I'll just quote wiktionary : "Brahman is the unchanging, infinite, immanent, and transcendent reality which is the Divine Ground of all matter, energy, time, space, being, and everything beyond in this Universe. The nature of Brahman is described as transpersonal, personal and impersonal by different philosophical schools."↩

10 Gautama The Buddha.↩

11 The battle of Yamazaki is the aftermath of Mitsuhide betraying. Hideyoshi battled him to avenge his lord Nobunaga. BTW until today, the reasons of Mitsuhide's coup is still unknown for sure.↩

12 ≈ - Approximately equals to.↩

13 him - refers to Oda Nobunaga↩

14 This name refer to how Oda Nobunaga called himself. Dairokuten-maō is in Buddhism the personification of evil and desilusion. Nobunaga used this title to taunt Shingen who said he was "the Protector of Buddhism, here to avenge what you did a Mt Hiei", Oda said "If you're the protector, I'm the Dairokuten-maō". Oda himself was pretty violent (for a good or bad reason) hence why he's usually see as a Demon. If you want to learn more Answer #3 & #4 in this forum, and Dairokuten Maou with some explanation about Nobunaga..↩

Chapter 5

Part 1

—— 「Mines of Raging Seas」 hot spring street hotel.

Rewinding time a little.

When Kuro Usagi and Ayesha that were dragged along by Kasukabe Yō for half a day were finally released, it was exactly the time when the Game Izayoi participated in, rang the ending gong. Ayesha returned to the hotel listlessly, Kuro Usagi hung her usamimi and was brought away by Yō. Kuro Usagi who had experienced her first sabotage in work stared at Yō with a grudge from the bottom of her heart.

“Uuu… So depressed. What would Izayoi-san tell me…”

“Mah, it’s fine. I will cover for you.”

“What cover up? It was 100% Yō-san’s fault!”

Pa! Kuro Usagi straightened her usamimi and swung the paper folding fan at Yō’s head. It seemed that the usamimi that returned added a tsukkomi ability.

Usamimi paper folding fan really had so many usages.

“Any-Anyway! Let’s rendez-vous with Asuka’s group! Since we came to the hot spring street, after all.”

“YES! My usamimi has heard. Asuka-san and Alma-san should have come here for reception…”

Kuro Usagi was looking around, right at that time.

Kudō Asuka and Almathea's voices came from the local product shop.

“Ara, you have come. Just in time.”

“Asuka-san! Alma-san! Were you two buying something?”

“Ei. I am just browsing around with my master. Has Kuro Usagi-dono worked hard refereeing? From the looks of it, Kasukabe-dono has also advanced.”

It seemed that Asuka brought Almathea clad in her maid uniform to shop at the hot spring street, both hands full of local products and hot spring manju.

Yō saw Almathea’s human form for the first time, and stared at her with a dissatisfied look.

“So unexpected. Alma can change into human form?”

“That’s right, may I know if there is any problem?”

“Un. The goat form is obviously more handsome, why did you have to change to human form?”

Hearing Yō’s straightforward comment, Alma could not help but be shocked.

To her who was originally a goddess, both the human and goat forms were her true self. She probably never considered the difference between her two forms.

But when others looked at her, her human form was mostly praised.

The eyes of logic and wisdom hidden behind the glasses.

Prim and proper facial features.

And a body that surpassed its functional purposes, beyond what the word “beauty” could describe.

That female body hidden beneath the strict maid uniform, was breathtaking even to the same gender.

But Yō did not care about her beautiful human form, but praised her goat form instead. Her form that was not used to being praised was praised so straightforwardly, being unconsciously happy was a matter of course.

“Thank you very much, Kasukabe-dono. But as you can see, my master possesses the high purity of a sheltered ojō-sama element. Then shouldn’t it be fitting for a quiet and sensible female servant to stay right next to this sheltered ojō-sama and aid her?”

“Ara, that’s such a high self-evaluation. I feel that before talking about reliability and sensibility, a poisonous-tongue-label should be added first.”

Asuka gave a discontented stare, while Alma covered her mouth and giggled. Seeing this, rather than a master-servant relationship, it seemed more like a sisterly harmonious atmosphere.

Yō grinned and asked the two.

“Are you both going to the hot springs?”

“Yes. The sun has almost set. I feel that the time is just right.”

“Both of you also seemed to have come here to wash your bodies. Want to go together?”

“YES! Let’s go for a 「No Name」 girls’ bath meeting!”

Kuro Usagi raised her usamimi and suggested. Especially, since Alma had not participated in this kind of event before. Due to processing the aftermaths of the battle against Aži Dakāha

and hosting the Game this time, there was no time for such an event. Kuro Usagi , as she swayed with her usamimi, felt that this was a good chance, but she didn't know why Asuka and Alma looked at each other with strange expressions.

"...That's true. This may be a good chance, Alma."

"Can I?"

"Yes. This is something that won't happen too often later. I will speak with them first."

All by your will, Alma lowered her head in respect.

'What was that about?'- this time it was Kuro Usagi and Yō's turn to look at each other, but it was not something to be discussed in front of the hotel. Soak in the hot spring first then talk, both sides agreed as such, and entered the hot spring hotel.

But as they reached the entrance of the female bath, they saw a「reserved」sign hung.

"Ayaya? There seems to be someone reserving the place?"

"Must be Porol boy. Because I heard it will be used for Mikado-san's reception."

Hearing the cheers coming from the male bath, the group nodded in agreement. Since it was used by「Six Scars」, entering it would be fine.

Asuka and co. started to undress after entering into the dressing room, putting their clothes in the baskets.

At this time, Asuka suddenly found someone's clothing.

(A Female yukata…? Had someone entered first?)

Probably a Community related to「No Name」or「Six Scars」. Asuka did not pay much attention, and wrapped her body with her towel after undressing. Yō, Kuro Usagi and Alma also quickly undressed and made preparations.

They entered the bathhouse after everyone was ready, and all of them exclaimed in unison.

"This is so wonderful…!"

Alma who was the loudest marched forward quickly. To her who came from Western Europe, the open air bathhouse culture would be very rare. Her usually quiet self let out an unusual voice filled with passion.

"Alma, don't tell me this is your first time coming to an open air bath?"

"Ei. Although I have heard about it before, this is the first time actually entering it. This is different from an indoor bath, it is interesting in other ways. The steam is thick, please watch your feet —— Master look out!"

Suddenly, Alma shouted and protected the three.

Lightning erupted from her right hand, repelling the flash strike from the serpens scorpius sword. Due to the low visibility, they could not determine whose slash it was, but the agility of the sword caused Alma to sharpen her gaze.

The flash just now was not intended to hurt people.

Most likely, it was to cut apart the towel covering them.

“Whip sword…! Possessing such swordsmanship but using it to reveal a lady’s skin, how shameless! Who exactly is it!? Even if it’s the public bath, there still are unforgivable acts!...There should be, right master?”

“Eh, that's right. But calm down first, Alma. The whip sword just now…”

The serpens scorpius sword was accurately aimed at a piece of thin cloth.

The trio from「No Name」had a clear memory of that strike. Or rather, there was only one knight that would use that kind of master swordsmanship to do such foolish things.

While focusing their gazes on the other side of the steam, Asuka calmly asked.

“Could it be...Faceless-san? What are you doing here?”

“——. That’s my line. Did I not reserve this place this period of time?”

Karan, the sound of a wooden bucket being hit came from the other side of the bathhouse. They couldn’t see the other side of the steam, but that voice undoubtedly belonged to the Queen’s knight; Faceless.

She normally had a calm and poised attitude, but for some reason she was anxious now. Asuka and co. who had spent quite some time with her, heard that kind of voice from her for the first time.

But no matter how one would look at it, Asuka’s side was the intruder.

They should have asked if they could enter the bath first.

Asuka fanned away the steam blocking the sight and advanced.

“—— !!?? Please halt, I already said I reserved here, why are you still coming over?”

“Entering without consent is our fault. But this is a good chance, I have some things to talk about with you. Thinking carefully, I had always been one-sidedly saved by you.”

Thinking back, ever since they met in「Underwood」, it had always been like that.

During the battle of giants, she had saved Asuka three times.

She also came to her rescue in the battle against Aži Dakāha. And different from Asuka who couldn't rush to the front lines, Faceless had been fighting there all this time.

Despite owning so many favors, she had never had the chance to say thanks.

"YES! Kuro Usagi also remembers how Faceless-sama had helped her! Although I don't know if it can be considered as payback, at least let me wash your back!"

"Save it. I don't remember helping you all, so no need to return the favor —— No, compared to that, listen to me first…!!!"

Splash, the sound of spring water being pushed away and someone leaving could be heard. It was so rare to see her flustered like that. At that moment, the youngest mondaiji·Kasukabe Yō's heart for pranks was ignited.

Yō flashed a thought, and asked towards the other side of the steam.

"Faceless. Don't tell me,right now… You aren't wearing a mask?"

"——!!??"

At this moment. Everyone in the bathhouse received a sudden flash of realization.

Yes, that's why she had to reserve it.

She, who would not take off her mask regardless of the situation, had her real face bared. The Mondaijis would never let go of such an interesting situation.

Faceless who immediately detected danger clicked her tongue, and wanted to escape, but was one step too slow. Asuka and Yō exchanged a glance in an instant and nodded in agreement.

"Kasukabe-san! Blow away the steam!"

"No problem!"

"Uu, there is a limit to how free ——!!!"

The anxiety of the Queen's Knight had reached it's peak at that moment.

It was not impossible to run out while covering her face with her physical ability, but she only had a towel around her body now.

No matter what, she could not run in the streets naked. Her knight rank would undoubtedly be stripped.

Despite so, there was no place to hide. The steam was instantly blown away by Yō's hurricane.

—— With this, she was forced into a corner.

“Come! The true face beneath the mask, display it to your heart’s content in the public bathhouse ——!!!”

Their line of sight cleared up.

Everyone held their breaths.

On the other side of the steam, the face of the helpless Faceless was finally ——

—— Covered by the wooden bucket.

“...Tsk, there is still this trick…!”

「Masked Knight」 kai, 「Wooden bucket Knight」 was born. Even though there was no intention to hide the skin below the neck, she didn’t want her face to be seen.

Even normal people could also see how depressed Asuka and company were. They did not know when such a one in a thousand chance would come by again. Coming this far, they might as well be forceful, the thought flashed past their mind.

But that wicked thought...was suppressed by a rising dragon like aura.

“I might as well ask. This prank, can I take it that you already have the resolve to throw your lives away?”

「Wooden bucket Knight」 let her whip sword extend. The cypress wooden bucket completely covered the parts above the neck, they couldn’t see her expression, but right now she must be extremely mad. And what’s worse, their Gift Cards were left in the baskets inside the dressing room.

Asuka and company had nothing right now, they could be hacked by 「Wooden bucket Knight」 anytime.

“Wait...wait just a minute! We were just joking!”

“Y-YES! This is just the usual Mondaiji-sama pranks! I will lecture them well later, so please let Kuro Usagi off here.”

“Offer your usamimi.”

“Let’s leave, eh Yō-san!?”

“Alright. I will forgive you in exchange for your two usamimis.”

Kacha.

“What situation is this!? Why is the innocent Kuro Usagi’s usamimi being treated as

hostage!?”

“In dire state[1]?”

“YES! This wasn’t the most skillful thing to do, you idiot!”

Zupan! Kuro Usagi’s usamimi started to hit Yō’s head.

Faceless sighed while listening to their conversation.

This was supposed to be a chance for her to take off her mask and relax peacefully, why did it get so noisy?

“.....”

Kacha!

“OK, stop fooling around! Kuro Usagi does not have the spare time to continue fooling around with you girls! I must still go wash her back, alright, alright, please come over here!”

Kuro Usagi used a never-seen-before tactic and pulled Faceless’s hand, walking towards the bath stand. Probably because they could feel that she was really angry. Asuka and Alma had bitter smiles at the unexpected development.

“...Mah, that’s fine. I also wanted to talk with her.”

“Is it really ok?”

“Ei. Because I have booked an appointment.”

Asuka gazed at Alma, then walked towards Kuro Usagi’s side.

The female group washed one another’s back, then soaked in the hot spring.

Part 2

Karan, the sound of the bell echoed within the bathhouse. The noisy female group also quietened down, enjoying the peaceful and quiet moment. Kuro Usagi stretching her back and usamimi, spoke in delight.

“Such a relaxing moment. As if the recent busy work was all a dream.”

“That’s right. It only means that this hot spring is just that good, isn’t it the best when everyone enjoys it together?”

“.....”

「Wooden bucket Knight」ignored Asuka’s question. She seemed to still be angry.

While everyone smiled bitterly, Alma coughed once, gathering everyone's attention.

"Although there is an outsider, it is fate to be able to get together naked like this. So, why don't we talk about the current condition of 「No Name」?"

"Current condition?"

"What do you mean?"

Yō and Kuro Usagi tilted their heads. Faceless seemed to be listening.

Alma raised three fingers, and asked.

"First, 「No Name」 is currently in a leaderless state. The businesses that were halted due to it was plenty. The most important matter, regarding the new Communities entering the alliance was shelved aside right?"

"YES. For Demon King, with 「Ouroboros」 as the objective, the talk about the major alliance."

Kuro Usagi stretched her usamimi.

"We have 「No Name」 as the alliance leader, with 「Six Scars」, 「Perseus」, 「Will o' Wisp」 as the center of the alliance. The undecided includes 「Salamandra」, 「Great Sage who Devastates Seas」, 「Laplace Demons」 and 「Draco Greif」."

"...That's impressive. All the 「Floor Master」s have gathered."

"No, not really. North guardian 「Onihime」 Alliance already replied indicating that they would not be joining this major alliance. It was an organization formed by the lower four digit Communities, there was some special… complicated circumstances."

'Is that so?'- the others responded. Since they were forming a major alliance against Demon Lords, they truly hoped that all the 「Floor Master」s could join, but it couldn't be helped if there were reasons for not joining.

"Then we planned to invite 「Great Sage who Leaves Heaven in Disarray」, Shuten Dōji」, 「Kerykeion」 —— and that Great Demon King, 「Queen Halloween」."

"Hah?"

At that moment, 「Wooden bucket Knight」(Faceless) let out an out of tune voice.

Kuro Usagi straightened her usamimi and nodded slightly.

"Shiroyasha-sama is no longer around now. The power of a three digit 「Floor Master」 is still needed to maintain Lower Floor order, hence this matter was brought into consideration… Then wouldn't it be a good idea to contact the Queen who exerted herself immediately in this battle, hence reaching this conclusion."

Towards Kuro Usagi's words, Alma nodded in agreement.

"That's right.「Avalon」which was once the South's「Floor Master」was originally the direct knight group under Queen. Even if we can't directly borrow Queen's power, is sending the organization directly under her still possible?"

"...So that's it. Is that's what you want to talk with me?"

Faceless was very shocked, and sighed with understanding at the same time. She belonged to the third seat of「Queen's Knights」directly under「Queen Halloween」.

If Queen was willing to send out personnel able to take up the「Floor Master」role, the first candidate was unquestionably her.

Yō nodded lightly while eating hot spring eggs she sneaked in.

"That's how it is huh. We are familiar with Faceless, it will be easy to cooperate."

"YES! And her strength is guaranteed! Since she is the third seat of「Queen's Knights」, then she would be the third strongest in the Celtic Pantheon. It's already more than enough to be the「Floor Master」!"

Kuro Usagi beamed her eyes, filled with expectation.

But Faceless sighed a little, shook her head.

"So that's it. I understand the situation. Having your expectations made me happy… but unfortunately, I have two things to announce."

"Eh?"

"First. The reason I am the third seat is not because of my own power. There are four who are better than me in sword proficiency and two better than me in spear proficiency. My original seat should be at best number nine. Despite so, I still obtained the third seat… This was because of the Gift I possess."

"Gift? Do you mean, the whip sword and the battle bow?"

Asuka tilted her head and asked.

But Faceless shook her head in denial.

"No, not that Gift. The materials came from the Elf village, but they're essentially simple weapons. I am talking about a different Gift from those… That's right. What I have, is a similar ranked Gift with Kasukabe-san's「Genome Tree」, or even above it."

"...Wha."

Faceless' confession caused everyone to suck in a cold breath.

Possessing a Gift similarly ranked with the highest known rank「Genome Tree」was definitely shocking, but the truly shocking part was not this.

Asuka and the others had witnessed her in battle many times before.

Her battle power could let her face a thousand enemies alone. Her refined swordsmanship could even compete against Izayoi who was physically stronger than her.

But if what she said was true, then they must change their evaluation.

In the battle against giants, Giant Dragon, and Aži Dakāha, this rare「Queen's Knight」...up till now, had never once used that Gift, that's how things turned out.

"Wait a minute. Possessing a Gift of that degree, why do you need to hide it until now? If you showed your truth strength, you might had been able to shift the tide of battle against the Giant Dragon, or Aži Dakāha towards an advantageous direction."

Asuka's eyes shone with sharpness, and bashed her verbally.

Huge casualties resulted from the two battles, it was literally a death struggle. Since she possessed that kind of Gift, it might had been possible to reduce unnecessary sacrifices.

"...I don't plan to justify my lack of action regarding the battle against the Giant Dragon. It was my decision not to use the Gift. But the battle against Aži Dakāha is different. If Sakamaki Izayoi had not defeated Aži Dakāha ,then ——"

She paused a moment. Faceless carefully chose her words, but eventually asserted.

"—— In the worst situation. I would have defeated Aži Dakāha."

"...!?"

"But things not developing to that conclusion was really great. Once I draw that sword, it would reveal my birth, and even if I did, the chances of winning still wouldn't be high. I am very respectful towards the sheer courage he had shown."

"S-so this is the reason. But since you had this much strength, you are giving others even more expectations to be a「Floor Master」!"

Kuro Usagi leaned her body forward. She not only had not given up, but instead showed even more interest. Faceless still shook her head, now feeling apologetic for building new expectations.

"That is impossible. I have already received the directive of Queen. Regardless if the alliance is successful, I probably won't be assigned as the「Floor Master」."

A directive from Queen. Considering she was the knight under the direct command, it must be prioritized before any order.

Kuro Usagi hung her usamimi down and sighed.

“Like that… Then I can’t force you. My usamimi heard that「Queen’s Knights」were all twisted people, so I was hoping more normal people like Faceless-sama to take up the role…”

“I agree on this. I also received some guidance from them, but those people really lacked the sensibility of normal people…. It’s just my suggestion, if the one sent is a spear wielding maid, I advise you all to escape immediately. Because she will forcefully train you all until you master it.”

「Wooden bucket Knight」(Faceless) suddenly looked afar.

She probably remembered some bad memories.

After confirming her speech has stopped, Alma raised her hand and spoke.

“I understand the matter regarding the Queen. But even if we receive her reply, there is no one who can handle it in「No Name」now. We must also consider with the leader missing, it would affect Queen’s mood… Kuro Usagi-dono. Do you understand my meaning?”

Alma used a roundabout way to explain.

Sensing the other party wanting to get into the main topic, Kuro Usagi straightened her usamimi.

“...We can’t just wait for Jin-bochan to return. Is this what you mean?”

“Ei. Since we are building such a huge alliance, we cannot let the others be the temporary leader. We must choose a new leader.”

Alma’s harsh words caused everyone to fall into silence. They originally held some hope for a hostage trade. But if they do not receive any messages from「Ouroboros」, they could not make any move. Being a temporary leader of the major alliance was simple, but returning the position to Jin once he return would be impossible.

“I heard that Jin-dono stayed in「Ouroboros」by his own will. There must be something that only he can accomplish. If that is so, then「No Name」should respect his will.”

“...YES. At least, Jin-bochan would not wish for the Community to be stagnant like now. And also...”

Kuro Usagi shook her usamimi and looked at Yō.

“—— Jin-bochan, had decided to resign from the leader position since long ago.”

“Eh?”

“‘If something happens to me, then please pass the leader’s role to the rightful Community

successor'. Before the giants appeared in「Kouen City」, Jin-bochan once had said so."

Community's rightful inheritor.

Upon hearing these words, everyone directed their attention towards Kasukabe Yō.

Yō accidentally swallowed the whole hot spring egg from the sudden attention.

"Eh… eh, eh!? Liar, wait a moment! By 'rightful successor', do you mean me!?"

Yō panicked from suddenly becoming the center of the topic. She originally thought that it had nothing to do with her, so she just listened idly at the side. She hadn't even expected that it would involve her this way.

Towards Kuro Usagi's suggestion, Alma pondered carefully and nodded.

"So that's it, this is indeed a good idea. Letting the previous leader's daughter to inherit「No Name」, then we could use the just cause of inviting the old「 」[2] alliance to create this major alliance. Granting an audience with Queen might also become much easier."

She was the daughter of the former leader who was once called the strongest man of「No Name」- Kasukabe Kōmei. Kuro Usagi and the others did not know Kōmei's surname, so they did not notice when she was summoned. But if they knew, her treatment would had been different. At this point it was the same for Izayoi and Asuka.

Jin probably thought, compared to the descendent of the treasurer, she would be more suitable to inherit「No Name」.

But the person involved could not take it.

Yō waved her hands and nervously rejected.

"Wait...wait a minute, this won't work! I can't be something like a leader!"

"Is it really true? Yō-san's ability grew rapidly, and you are also quick witted. Most importantly, you thought about your comrades. Kuro Usagi personally feels that you are suitable."

"Bu-But."

"Also! Jin-bochan must have also considered the possibility of getting into a situation like now, hence he left those words behind?"

Kuro Usagi stretched her usamimi and recommended.

They actually didn't know, Jin and Pest secretly made a promise. Passing the leader position of「No Name」to the rightful inheritor. Then after retrieving the name and flag, they would go out on a journey, realizing Pest's wish, he was probably planning like that.

But Yō, who knew nothing about such things, looked at Asuka for help.

“And, and also, if you want to choose a new leader, there are also other candidates! Izayoi and Asuka will definitely do better than me.”

“Ara, I don’t think so at all. Actually Izayoi-san had also mentioned in the morning. ‘Whether I can win or not is unknown’.”

Hoeh!? Kasukabe Yō let out a strange sound.

Although she told Ayesha like that, she thought that the difference between their abilities was still big. She never thought that Izayoi would rate her so highly.

“Iz-Izayoi did? Really?”

“Ei. Regardless if it’s true or false, I don’t feel that Kasukabe-san would be far behind Izayoi-san. Personally speaking, I also hope that one of you becomes the new leader.”

“But...but, then I recommend Asuka! She is more mature than me, also a hard worker, also thinking for her comrades, although a little too mischievous, she is graceful and has proper etiquette!”

“No, Kasukabe-dono. Very sorry, master cannot take on the leader position. —— Master. It’s about time to talk about the main topic.”

That deliberate tone gathered everyone’s attention.

Asuka closed her eyes, and stood up from the bathtub with force.

“Everyone. Please listen to me calmly.”

“...? Un.”

“Yes. What is it about?”

Yō and Kuro Usagi tilted their heads and asked. It was rare to see her speak to everyone in that manner. She was pretty active, but not the type to raise suggestions.

The steam thinned a little, Asuka raised her head and looked at the clouds at dusk, then declared with a strong-willed tone.

“I, Kudō Asuka —— After this「Adamantine Forge」, Plan to separate from「No Name」.”

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1 In dire state - Japanese pronunciation of hostage and dire state are close.↩

2 「 」 - The name of the old alliance is blanked out because it cannot be revealed at this time.↩

Interlude

Part 1

—— Natural underground jail in the mountain.

Contrast to the lively mining town, in the depth of the cave without a trace of life, was the place His Highness was imprisoned. Apart from the person delivering food on schedule, he was alone.

Instead of a hostage, this treatment was more like a prisoner. Although he was not chained up, it was a cruel environment where he could only use the water from a small water tree to quench his thirst and clean his body. Originally, providing a single room and the bare minimum guarantee of living condition was the right way.

"....."

However —— to be treated this way, was because he committed too many sins.

He assaulted three main cities「Floor Master」governed with「Underwood」as first, dealing a devastating blow. Gryphon Gry also lost his partner rider in that war. The grudge surrounding His Highness was thick even in the Lower Floor. There were many voices that wanted torturing interrogation and other cruel methods for the sake of revenge. The reason it did not result to that, was because he helped Izayoi in defeating Aži Dakāha.

It would be impossible to defeat Aži Dakāha without his help, Izayoi pleaded as such. If not for that, he would have been tortured long ago.

(...Mah, it doesn't matter anyway.)

His Highness rolled around while sitting on the rock floor. It was rare for His Highness to show a passionate expression, but his eyes were even colder now. The「Defeat Aži Dakāha」promise with the「Storyteller」was indirectly kept. If he did not intercept,「No Name」and their comrades would have been destroyed. With this he could temporarily guarantee Jin and Pest's safety.

The reason His Highness did not immediately return to them, was because he judged that he had the value of being a captive. Considering His Highness was still useful to「Ouroboros」, they would naturally mention hostage exchange.

But it had already been three month since then. There was no movement at all.

Not sure if they gave up on him or that he lost his value. But「Ouroboros」side must have a major change, causing him to be no longer a necessary existence.

If that was the case, he would be free. This was a good thing, he could make his life plan by himself in future.

Thanks to that, he could not muster any motivation.

(It's easy to get out. Although it's a mine of「Adamantine」, but it's just a slightly harder ore without refining. It would not even be a work for me.)

Maybe this was Izayoi's meaning.

Since he let himself be caught, then when he wanted to leave would be up to himself. With that they would be even, it was probably that meaning. But even if he got out, there wasn't anything he wanted to do.

The reason His Highness opposed「Ouroboros」, was because he hated his life to be decided by others. There was no other noble thought.

Despite so, if he was forced to name some things he wanted to do… then it would only be to know if Rin, Graiya, Aura and others' safety.

But even if he wanted to find them, there was no destination.

(To actually be found by「Storyteller」, it is such a painful blow to me. If it was astral or god type that made contact with us, I could use「Imaginary Star Taisai」to completely seal it.)

He swept away the water droplets that fell onto the stalactites unhappily. He would not care about such matter normally, but he was so bored until he thought about such a trivial matter.

「Imaginary Star Taisai」was the「Another Cosmology」that could seal the strongest species apart from dragon into a virtual world. Despite the effect towards non-strongest species was only halving their spirit status, in contrast, it was specialized in the limited usage of overcoming every difference in ability and obtain victory as long as it was the opponent of those two species,

Originally, the plan was to use this「Imaginary Star Taisai」to capture pursuers sent by「Ouroboros」for information, and then continue their guerrilla war.

But this plan was ruined. If Maxwell could be quickly eliminated it probably would not develop into this situation, but this was all just hindsight.

(There is nothing to do even if I get out. And regardless of where I go in Little Garden, we are still escapee… The so-called freedom, is unexpectedly boring.)

His Highness stared at the tip of the stalactites with cold eyes.

His Highness who had lived his life following orders from「Ouroboros」, had no existing life objective. He also had no capability to do something for Rin and co. He could only wait for them to make contact now.

He clicked his tongue, it was already countless number of times he looked at the lantern in

the jail.

He felt a presence on the stairs leading to outside, and it was then.

"...Hihahaha. How is it, brat, still well?"

Despicable male laughter echoed in the underground prison. Hearing that unexpected voice, His Highness stood up.

"That voice… Is it Demon King of Confusion?"

"Yes. It's fine if you are energetic. That lass Rin and others were worried about you you know?"

Demon King of Confusion walked towards the jail with light steps. His appearance was not Sandra Doltrake, but the ape demon they first met.

"...? You dispelled the Game?"

"No.「Salamandra」completed a part of the game rule, after the Host and Player separated, the Great Me went to chat with the other side. We made a deal, and they would let you out. With this「Floor Master」would not send pursuers for the time being. Heihei, it really helped that the previous generation of Fire Dragon was easy to talk with!"

Demon King of Confusion laughed wildly.「Salamandra」originally had no such authority.

It was「No Name」that captured His Highness. If they let him go on their own, it would probably affect the bonding of the major alliance.

But what surprised His Highness was not this.

"...I don't understand, Demon King of Confusion. Why do you still help us? Didn't you hear about what kind of Community「Ouroboros」is?"

"Oi oi, that kind of thing would be clear without investigating. The Great Me is a pure Demon Lord you know? I already sensed that「Ouroboros」alliance is not a Demon Lord alliance long ago. It is probably some super huge God group pulling the string behind right?"

Demon King of Confusion stood before the jail while laughing. But after hearing him, His Highness was even more shocked.

This Demon Lord had a different beneficial relationship with them. His Highness was only trying to use this Demon Lord. And this Demon Lord was not foolish enough not to notice this.

Alright, Demon King of Confusion faced His Highness after saying so, staring at him while stroking his beard.

"Mah, the Great Me coming here has only one purpose. To appraise you."

“Appraise?”

“Ah ah. What, I don’t do something so troublesome. Just asking some questions.”

Demon King of Confusion showed a disgusting smile, then sat down. He did not immediately open the lock of the jail, probably meant whether or not he would release him depended on his answers.

—— He really got looked down. This level of jail, he could break out if he wanted to. He probably wanted some information before breaking away from the Community. He was originally a mercenary type outsider Demon Lord, Perhaps he came to bargain, using「Imaginary Star Taisai」as compensation was also possible.

Despite His Highness feeling a little stunned, he still straightened his back and waited for the questions. If he made some unreasonable demands, he would instantly break the cage and decapitate him.

But different from His Highness’s prediction, Demon King of Confusion suddenly ceased his laughter.

“You —— Do you want to build a real Demon Lord Alliance?”

That was not a despicable smile and rough demon ape voice.

But as a pure Demon Lord, prestigious question.

“Real… Demon Lord Alliance?”

“That’s right. In the past of this Little Garden there was the largest Demon Lord Alliance called「Seven Great Sages」, you know about this matter?”

Of course. It would be strange not to know.

「Seven Great Sages」—— also known as「Seven Great Demon Lords」, regardless of Eastern or Western, seven Demon Kings gathered under the「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」flag. They treated Heaven, Taoism, Senjutsu, Buddhism and other strong God Groups as enemies at the same time, even till now, it was still a hot topic in Little Garden.

“Yes. The Demon Lord Alliance the Great Me mentioned, in other words, is just like「Shichiten」that gathered Demon Lords from various nationality, coming under the same flag. And you also have the calibre to be the leader. —— Isn’t that right? The last incarnation of「Avatara」, the newest and strongest Demon Lord-sama possessing「Eschatology decadence」.”

“...Fuun. That matter, where did you hear it from?”

“There is no need to find out. The hero that needs to collect multiple Sun Authority to complete his spirit status were not many in this world. Even Ulster’s strongest warrior and

Sun God (Surya)'s son only needed one[1], but even with two it was insufficient for you. And to be able to display Leo Sovereignty's[2] invulnerability Gift, there are only two who fits all these in history."

"....."

"One of them is the root of the Leo Sovereignty inheritor, Greek hero Heracles. That guy, it seemed to be summonable with just one, but to maintain the complete spirit status as a God[3] or Celestial, five Sun Authorities are needed. —— But what's more horrifying is, your complete form is even above that. Equator and Ecliptic path combined, estimated ten Sun Celestial Beasts were needed, it could only be you who contained a foreign world."

Demon King of Confusion revealed His Highness's spirit status with a confident smile.

And what's more terrifying, his deduction was almost completely correct.

—— 「Avatara」 was one of the 「Another Cosmology」 of Indian Gods, it included the prevention of 「Eschatology decadence」 - 「Kali Yuga」's inheritance that was estimated to appear at the Outer World in the future, the 「Another Cosmology」 that possessed extreme power.

The power of 「Another Cosmology」 was originally used to destroy its target 「Cosmology」, possessing ability that could even exceed Almighty Floor (Little Garden three digit).

The 「Avesta」 that Aži Dakāha used was a classic example. That was the extreme of dualism that defined itself as justice and evil's right most side, imitating the opponent's 「Cosmology」 and possessed itself as the direct opposition. Simply put, it had the power of 'One against one definitely cannot win, one against many as long as the opponent did not inherit human blood, it will increase its own Gift' that surpassed Almighty Floor. The only exceptions are the the Gifts of Divine Spirits that are contained within 「Zoroastrianism」.

The 「Avatara」 His Highness possessed could obtain the respective power from the Equator, Ecliptic path Celestial Beasts inherited in his hands. In the past, the power that blocked Kuro Usagi's 「Brahmāstra Replica」 was this power. That was originally the Leo Sovereignty held by Heavenly Lion that belonged to 「No Name」.

He possessed the fourth 「Avatara」 incarnation Lion Celestial Beast Narasiṃha[4] that could 'reflect all weapons in the world' regardless if it was made my a God or a Celestial being, and reverted the fate of defeat.

His Highness also used the protection of this Gift, protected Sakamaki Izayoi from the divine spear's attack, creating a victory chance.

"The second 「Avatara」 incarnation was probably World Dragon Kurma that used Equator Dragon's Sun Authority to appear. It appeared to be a power that instantly expanded spirit status… Hei hei, so impressive! Originally one of them was enough for the usage of 「Another Cosmology」, but yours actually contained ten worlds of that scale. Your qualification as the

「Origin Candidate」could even surpass「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」.”

“...So that’s it, you sure investigated carefully. Is this the reason you want me to be the leader?”

The qualification above「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」. Building a new Demon Lord Alliance with that, and he himself would become the strategist. However, Demon King of Confusion shook his head in denial with a bitter smile.

“No. Truthfully speaking, there isn’t any specific reason. But I just feel that if it’s you... you can help me create huge havoc the Little Garden.”

“...Just this?”

“Just this.”

There was no need for others. This kind of overly natural instant reply, even His Highness was also shocked.

There was no feeling of necessity to guess for any ulterior motive, a simplistic answer. The reason he did not lie, was because the objective of this man was simple and pure, with nothing to hide.

This Demon Lord... this short evil god that was granted Confusion spirit status did not disguise himself, simply wanting to wreck havoc in Little Garden from the bottom of his heart, wanting to let His Highness be the leader.

“Hei hei… How is it? Any ground for consideration?”

“...I don’t understand your reasoning. What can you gain from doing so?”

“I didn’t think of gaining something. Nothing at all. If I must give a reason…”

Suddenly, his smile disappeared. The Demon King of Confusion that showed an icy stare for an instant, grudgingly muttered while stroking his beard.

“...Just being expected.”

“Being expected, by who?”

“By the world.”

Eyes not shifting the least, Demon King of Confusion announced,

He spoke of the reason for his birth which was「The enemy of the world」.

“You should also know the Great Me’s inheritance, then let the Great Me clarify it. Simply speaking,「Demon King of Confusion」is a Demon Lord that was for the sake of getting defeated by「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」, a Demon Lord temporarily manufactured while

cutting corners from the crust of star. —Understand what it means? The point is, the Great Me was born solely for the sake of getting defeated by the inheritor of star —— 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」, a low-grade half Celestial being.”

Hearing the truth poured out from him, His Highness doubted his ears.

He heard that as an immature half Celestial being, 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」 was not given a destiny and was born. She was transported together with mudslide from the star crust to surface, appearing as an incomplete form.

In order to let 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」 awaken as a normal Celestial being, the trial (Game) that was sent out was this 「Demon King of Confusion」.

At the same time, another fact was shown.

“Then... you are the little brother of 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」?”

“It seems to be the case. Hei hei, how cruel this is, right? The bright elder sister possessed talent and kindness from birth, while the foolish little brother was forced with useless body and evilness. It was such a disgusting way to call it as a trial for inheritance of star. And because of knowing this, that bastard could not bear to kill the Great Me.”

The non-human, non-god, non-demon 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」.

Towards the pure Demon Lord that appeared before the originally lonely her, she did not kill him, but let him go. The her that did not awaken as a Celestial spirit, did not carry out her mission, could not rightly guide the world, and ignited the 「Seven Sage War」, that first in the history mythic war.

This was all because of her mistake for not killing this Demon King of Confusion.

“...But well. 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」 was not the only one in the wrong. The Great Me as a Demon Lord back then was also useless. Although I abducted human girls and demon children to serve me, and robbed treasures from the riches… But there was one thing I absolutely could not do. Even though I became a Demon Lord, that act was forced into my brain, but I could not do it no matter what.”

“That is?”

His Highness immediately followed-up. Then His Highness noticed.

He was listening to this Demon Lord describing his past.

“—— Eating the organs of a live child. As a Demon Lord that resided in children's heart, devouring the blood and flesh along with the soul, only then would the Great Me complete the demonic trait of the 「Demon King of Confusion」... But well, in that kind of strange area, 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」 is quite similar to the Great Me. No matter what, 「Eating Flesh」 is something we both can’t do.”

Despite the violent behavior of「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」, her heart was even more dazzling than the clear starry sky, her breath was even cleaner than the fresh air on the mountains. Her pure soul rejected intaking of flesh, absolutely not swallowing it.

"The depressed Great Me grew more violent, but just that matter was something that absolutely could not be done. Knowing this,「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」could not even bear to kill the Great Me. Such a foolish person. All blame her who could not kill her shitty little brother… that idiot, lost the bond between her seven sworn siblings that she should truly treasure. It's all because, the Great Me as a Demon Lord, was only a half-assed fooling King."

Born for the sake of being defeated.

Born only for the sake of being defeated.

Facing such a person, in the far away past, she once used a dazzling smile and told him.

"It's fine. Even Demon Lord has other choices of living!"

He did not try to understand the meaning behind his sister's open-minded words, but lived on depending on this kindness.

In the end his sister saw hell because she did not kill the foolish younger brother. That did not mean disaster befell her, but her surrounding itself turned into hell.

"The Great Me never thought about it would be fine if she just killed me. It was not like the Great Me wanted to get killed. That was a kind of conclusion after all… But if I could not even accept that shitty destiny, then I really don't have anything left in my life. There exists nothing more fleeting that the freedom that cannot be obtained in this world… The you now should be able to understand?"

His Highness endured the impulse to reflexively nod his head in agreement to Demon King of Confusion's words. Because doing so would be acknowledging this man's words was touching him.

"So the Great Me had made up my mind. 'You, devote to evilness' —— Since such an expectation was made, then use the cards in your hands to challenge the extreme! The Great Me wants to make everything in the world… Burn to nothingness with billion degrees!!! Let every existence that caused the birth of「Demon King of Confusion」, implanting the regret that cannot be forgotten even after reincarnation…!!!"

"....."

Demon King of Confusion let out all his frustration that had been kept inside for a long time.

That appearance, caused His Highness to drew a cold breath. That Demon who had lived like a drifting cloud had such a degree of enthusiasm hidden, he could not discover it till today.

Then His Highness knew, the heat of that soul, was exactly what he was lacking now.

As a pure Demon Lord, this life that was constantly searching for what he should do, if it was mocked by the will of the star, by then Demon King of Confusion's determination would probably reach a true awakening.

"Your objective is… revenge?"

"That's also correct. No matter what kind of truth was known, the Great Me would not accept it. But, because of that, the Great Me do not want to pretend not knowing anything."

His own life, was just in front of the deciding match against 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」.

For that, he must first build a Demon Lord Alliance that could rival the 「Seven Great Sages」.

"...Even during the period when Aži Dakāha was rampaging, there was no sign of 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」 appearing. It seems that the situation that bastard got caught in was even more complicated than what the Great Me imagined. Then the only way would be to spread the threat even greater than Aži Dakāha, luring 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」 out from Heaven."

As a Demon Lord, now was the time to put Little Garden into even greater chaos.

Making a Buddha sect, or another God Group, a huge alliance that would require even the Heaven Army to mobilize — Even surpassing the Shichiten 「Demon Lord Alliance」, using this to drag 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」 out.

"Not a single one left. A big alliance that can become the enemy of all God Groups, built by the Great Me and you. This alliance also has benefits for you. Although 「Ouroboros」 has exiled you now, they will surely capture you soon. The Great Me needs you to be the leader and gather Demon Lords, and you can use it to annihilate 「Ouroboros」... How about it? Not a bad contract?"

"...What if 「Ouroboros」 immediately come after me?"

"They won't. Understand? Absolutely won't. But, they won't let you go as well."

Demon King of Confusion announced confidently, lifted his index finger and continued.

"This matter is only known to those related to Celestial spirit and a part of God Groups. Listen carefully. The present where all the 「Last Embryo」 have been defeated, the strong ones in Little Garden are warming up. Not because the threat has disappeared. But because large scale Gift Games that involve the Sun Authority will be held soon."

"Using Sun Authority… Large scale Gift Game?

"Yes. Details are unclear, but as long as one possesses Sun Authority, regardless of God, hero or Demon Lord all have an equivalent qualification to participate. Right now the God

Groups are having a headache to pick out participants. We can use this period to construct the Demon Lord Alliance, stand on the same stage, deliver a punch to those guys's face!!!"

Dong! Demon King of Confusion roared after kicking the metal bar of the jail.

On the stage where all kinds of Gods and Demons can participate equally, challenging the God Group head on, questioning the meaning of his whole existence.

After he finished the speech of his ambition and pro and con, he returned to the first question, stared at His Highness.

"—— Join hands with the Great Me, His Highness. Then make all the God groups, make everything that bound your life burn to nothingness with billion degree flame…!!!"

Head on, ravaging the enemy on the same stage.

Demon King of Confusion for the sake of carrying out his destiny.

His Highness for the sake of obtaining his true freedom.

"....."

His Highness finished listening to Demon King of Confusion, began to think while lying on the ground.

His first time to ponder, his life compass that he had never thought about until now. His Highness that lived his life taking orders, even if he thought about how to carry out his order, he never thought for his own life once.

The underground jail that was assaulted by cold wind, was taken over by silence.

Demon King of Confusion was not anxious at all. He could run away anytime if he felt like it.

After at least ten minutes passed while they were facing each other.

His HIghness suddenly curved the corner of his lip.

"Demon King of Confusion. Although you spoke a whole bunch of things like that… but your main objective, is only to obtain the「Dragon」Sun Authority on my hand right?"

"Heihaha! It would be a lie to say no!"

The two relaxed their tension, laughed aloud together. But those two did not speak out the words in their heart. His Highness believed that Demon King of Confusion's vengeful heart was real. The heat this man's soul possessed, he truly felt envious.

His Highness stood up, speechlessly grabbed the metal bar of the jail, smiled peacefully.

"Although this kind of incite made me unhappy, it is still a thrilling suggestion. OK, I will

follow your plan.”

“...Hei hei. There is no return you know?”

“That’s fine. It’s a life without objective anyway… Ah ah, no. There is one now.”

Oh? Demon King of Confusion let out a surprised voice.

His Highness grabbed the metal bar tightly, enthusiasm flashed in his eyes.

“To those people ——「Ouroboros」that bound me, a good punch in the face. If I can do it, I will feel elated…!”

His Highness’s right hand dwelled immense power that could not be imagined from his thin arm. Metal bar bearing the strength comparable to star crust, easily and effortlessly bent and destroyed.

Demon King of Confusion threw the key aside, welcomed him with a grand and despicable laugh.

“Heihahahahaha!!! Very good, then your motive will be that. The Great Me wants to beat up「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」that bastard! You want to beat up「Ouroboros」! Complicated explanation is unneeded! ...Hei hei, what, you are just the same as the Great Me imagined! We can get along well!”

“Just similar objective only. — Then, what do we do next? Greeting those Demon Lords there were interested in the Sun Authority Gift Game?”

“Ah ah, regarding that matter.”

“I have a plan for that.”

On the staircase, an unexpected voice came over. Not noticing until now was probably because they were too engrossed in their conversation. Jin Russel and Katsura Rin’s presence appeared before His Highness, then he widened his eyes in surprise.

“Yahoo, His Highness. Still comfortable living underground?”

“How is it possible… But that was surprising. Putting Rin aside, Jin. You also want to join hands with us?”

“————.”

“Heihaha! The「Genie Contractor」this brat possessed is really useful! We will defeat the Demon Lords that rejected our invitation, then make them obey him! If everything goes well, we can gather enough forces in just one year!”

Demon King of Confusion revealed a despicable laughter.

But the meaning of His Highness's question was something else.

"Not that I want to use Demon King of Confusion's words, but there is really no turning back. Firstly without question, you cannot return to「No Name」for the rest of your life. — Is this fine?"

His Highness reminded Jin. To carry out Demon King of Confusion's plan, he would be the key of the Alliance. He was not allowed to participate with a half-hearted attitude.

But that was just unnecessary worry.

Jin gently touched the pied piper ring, nodded his head with an unshaken resolve.

"To me… To us, there is a necessity to participate in the Sun Authority Game. And I believe it will eventually help「No Name」. There is nothing for you to worry."

—— Heeh, His Highness let out a respectful voice. Jin seemed to know some details about the Sun Authority Game.

Then there was no need to ask further.

As if calculated, Rin also walked forward at this moment.

"Unfortunately, Aura-san has to remain by the teacher's side. Graiya seems to be coming with us, so we will be together from now on. I want to lay low for a while, so I will be going to the North Floor."

"Is that so… You can continue to be the Game Controller right?"

His Highness asked as if it was natural, Rin also replied as if it was natural.

"Of course. How can I leave someone who doesn't know about the world like His Highness alone!"

"I am so grateful until I want to try. But is that fine? The reason you came to Little Garden, was for saving your family right?"

"That won't change, but for that I must work harder to become a poet. I will also trouble His Highness to help me in that regard, yoroshiku!"

Rin saluted jokingly.

His Highness revealed a bitter smile in amazement and nodded in agreement.

Part 2

—— This was afterwards.

It was an hour later that the jail which imprisoned His Highness had been broken was

known. Many years after that, there was no record of them attacking any Community on the surface.

But what's unbelievable was, immediately after that, incidents of seal mounds that were made by former 「 」to seal Demon Lords were destroyed one by one.

Traces of fierce fighting could be found, hence the objective was believed to destroy seal mounds, but these incidents had a similarity.

The Demon Lords that were supposed to be unsealed, did not attack any Community, but vanished without anyone knowing.

Due to no major damage was caused by the destruction of seal mounds, the investigation was suspended after about a year, then no one remembered it after another half a year.

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1 Ulster refer to one of the 4 cycles of Irish mythology, the strongest warrior should be Cú Chulainn. Sūrya is the Sun and chief of Solar Deities in Hinduism, his son is Karṇa.↩

2 Nemean Lion From The Labors of Hercules. It has a skin that can't be pierced by any weapon.↩

3 Just to add information, Héraclès is, with Asclépiós (Asclepius), the only two heroes in Greek mythology which were also Gods. Their principal functions (look on Wikipedia for the full) respectively God of strength, heroes, divine protector of mankind ; and God of Medicine and Healing. Hence the fact that medicine have the Rod of Asclepius as symbol.↩

4 Narasimha (litt. man-lion) is an "avatar of Vishnu and one of Hinduism's most popular deities. Narasiṃha is often visualised as having a human torso and lower body, with a lion face and claws" (Wikipedia).↩

Chapter 6

Part 1

Zaza ——, such noise was heard. Tokuteru immediately raised his alert, released his spirit status.

(...Was it my imagination?)

He suppressed his spirit status, finished the wine after meal in one gulp. Probably, it was just the sound of swaying trees in the middle garden.

After Mikado Tokuteru enjoyed his dinner, he did not immediately visit Izayoi, but to connect with alliance member「Laplace Demons」. He might be planning to verify the theory content he discovered during the bath. Mikado Tokuteru in bathrobe sat down cross-legged on the tatami floor and crossed his arms.

He let the「Lapko」who arrived sat on his knee, and told it the reason.

"—That's all. Quickly open the gate of time that connects to the era Sakamaki Izayoi lived in. He may have already made contact with the inventor of「Third Perpetual Machine」. We must investigate his experiences."

Lapko was eating spotted pear happily while listening to Mikado Tokuteru's explanation.

She was Lapko III who was known as the commander. She walked unsteadily while swaying the red dress she wore, and provided her own opinion.

"Contact with the inventor of「Third Perpetual Machine」... Ei, that did happen. This is definitely true."

"What. You already detected it?"

"Detected, this is not the right way to put it. Since I also only found out coincidentally… But, Indra. That has all been past. Up to now there is no need to dig into the past right?"

"It's not over yet right? As long as the Perpetual Machine's chronicle and inventor are not determined, a new「Last Embryo」may appear."

「Last Embryo」—— Putting the world in its end, the Demon Lord that would realize the final myth.

Yes, the oldest Demon Lords had all been defeated. The existences that threatened Little Garden had all been vaporised.

Although the threat from「Ouroboros」remained, no matter what, their objective should not be to destroy Little Garden. And the stage to conclude the fight would appear in the new future.

“The present where all「Last Embryo」had been defeated, the second Sun Authority competition will be pushed forward a lot earlier than predicted. But I didn’t expect the Akashic Record of The End (Omega)[1] would be decided earlier than The Beginning (Alpha).”

“I agree on that. Since the Authority competition also included the intention to choose the person that will defeat the「Last Embryo」.「Ouroboros」secretly collecting Sun Authorities, was probably to get a head start while we hold the Game event without knowing their activities, but now those guys do not need to hide their identities. —— The second Sun Authority competition, will be a head on clash without trickeries.”

“Of course, this is the so-called Gift Game. But once we think about being assigned as organizing staff, we can feel our stomach cringe.”

Hearing Lapko’s bland words, Mikado Tokuteru revealed a bitter smile. Because he could not even imagine her being mentally burdened.

Lapko III continued to enjoy her spotted pear.

“Every realm is busy transferring Sun Authority and choosing「Origin Candidate」. Since the pawns that could surpass「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」,「Kalki」and Sakamaki Izayoi are not easy to find. We will probably be busy with Game making and building the stage. The investigation on Perpetual Machine could be shelved for the future?”

“That won’t do.「Third Perpetual Machine」is too dangerous. I won’t say that it must be under our management, but passing the invention authority to the rightful person that can use it for good purposes is also God Pantheon’s responsibility.”

Tokuteru crossed his arms and declared. As a corner of the Gods, as someone who had fought with「Last Embryo」till now, he held onto a sense of justice to watch over humanity not leaving the right path until the end.

“You would be a proper god if you had been working diligently like this.” This sentence already reached Lapko’s III’s throat, but after realizing nobody would become happy even if she said it, she swallowed it back.

“Mah… That’s also true. The whole story of the Perpetual Machine also connects to the mystery of why Izayoi boy was chosen as「Origin Candidate」. It may be better for you who is the leader of「Heaven Army」to know.”

“The reason Sakamaki Izayoi was chosen?”

“Umu. Croix seemed to think that him being chosen as「Origin Candidate」was a coincidence, but I have already seen through the truth behind the myth that surrounds him. Since everything happened to now are all closely connected. Including the existence of「Last Embryo」and「Third Perpetual Machine」, let me explain it briefly.”

After she finished the last piece of pear, she stood on top of the plate, raised her index finger.

Mikado Tokuteru maintained his crossed arms and sat upright, listening to the truth she was going to explain.

Part 2

“First let’s talk about the premise. Do you know the spirit status that constructed Aži Dakāha?”

“Do you need to ask that now? Isn’t it the eschatology that combined the tale of Zahhāk from Persian Poem[2] and modern history? At least, that Jibril told me as such.”

Mikado Tokuteru answered her question in slight amusement.

—— Zahhāk, was talking about the king that was destined to become Demon Lord Aži Dakāha in Persian Poem. He who was fancied by Evil God used treachery to obtain the crown, grew into an ugly dragon after sprouting two wings from the shoulders, using fear to control its citizens[3]. Although the hero of that era[4] defeated the Demon Lord, he could not kill it no matter what. At that time Angel (Jibril[5]) appeared and told him ‘The time to exterminate this Absolute Evil has not arrived’, and used the sealing method to seal it inside the gigantic peak.

Then, in order to bring the end to the world after the Demon Lord resurrected, it destroyed one third of the world. The one that would appear to resist this eschatology was none other than「Hero destined to save the future」.

Tokuteru continued after understanding the above foundation.

“Considering the inheritance of「Destroying one third of the world」, Demon Lord Aži Dakāha’s appearance had been misunderstood as「Perma iceberg collapsing due to irregular Sun activity chronicle」for a long time.”

“Umu. The perma icebergs in South Pole or something melting would cause water level to rise, in this situation, Earth’s land would shrink by one third… But the truth wasn’t so. Perma iceberg collapse was at best the by product of eschatology.”

Correct — Mikado Tokuteru had another reason to reject the theory of NBCR weapon. It was simple, because he believed that such a level of weapon could not destroy the environment of a planet.

The predicted that the eschatology recorded in「Zoroastrianism」was very similar to Indian mythology「Kali Yuga」in content[6]. This hinted that super-developed civilization would be vanquished in the kindness recession era.

“Hence we can conclude that the chronicle Aži Dakāha pointed towards —「Super Weapon that can destroy environment of planet」and「Evil authority user that uses the Super Weapon」theories… Right?”

Inheritance of「Destroying one third of the world」= Invention of「Super Weapon that can

destroy environment of planet」.

Inheritance of「Obtaining the crown because of Evil God」= Appearance of「Evil authority user that uses the Super Weapon」.

The overlapping of these two points led to the appearance of「Last Embryo」Aži Dakāha.

"Umu. The former is「Third Perpetual Machine」. The latter due to the origin of Aži Dakāha's inheritance being Persia, hence the theory of「A Middle East country that sponsored energy development」would be strong."

Completion of Perpetual Machine, signified countries that produced first tier energy from oil facing destruction.

This would be a fatal invention towards middle east countries. Hence it was deducted that for the sake of new privilege, they were most likely going to become sponsors for the mysterious inventor of the Perpetual Machine. Considering there to be the place of origin for inheritance, it was feared that a new Demon Lord that had similar spirit status as Aži Dakāha might be born from middle east countries.

"The「Inventor of Perpetual Machine」that was always treated as a question mark, only this was something even our intelligence network could not investigate. But we finally caught the tail after hearing Izayoi's words. We heard that Izayoi once travelled the world with Canaria. Then following their route."

"No. That's unnecessary."

Lapko III took out a small bottle from the tiny Gift Card with a Kada sound.

Inside it was a piece of dried blood.

"...Blood clot? What is this?"

"It's the blood of Sakamaki Izayoi. Saurian Demon King requested me, asking me to confirm whether he is truly a human."

"Saurian Demon King? Why?"

"Probably because he was worried that if he is a new half Celestial being,「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」would be abandoned. Since the Demon Lord of Confusion that is left alone is an example. But the result of the investigation showed that he is 100% pure human. Other than that his livelihood has also been investigated… Indra, please listen calmly to my following words."

Fumu, Mikado Tokuteru nodded his head exaggeratedly. Not correcting his name was probably because they were old acquaintances. Those two were comrades that fought against Dystopia Demon Lord in West Floor. Both side trusted each other's ability. Since she seriously said 'Please be mentally prepared', then it must be an important case.

Lapko III took a deep breath as if to suppress her excited emotion, and pointed at Izayoi's blood clot.

"First point. His real name is not「Sakamaki Izayoi」."

"Hoh? Then what is it?"

"...「Saigō」. That is his true surname."

「Saigō」— A surname he never heard of. He felt that it might be related to history of Japan, but it was probably unrelated.

That surname seemed to have some symbolic meaning —— Thinking to that part.

Mikado Tokuteru's expression had a drastic change.

"「Saigō」(西郷)...「Saigō」(西業)? No, don't tell me?"[7]

"Second point. His, Saigō's parents are destined to die in the Parallel World Intersection point. Even if Canaria did not abduct him during his infant period, Izayoi boy also had the fate of definitely going missing at that point of time. "

Mikado Tokuteru was speechless. That meant「Death of Izayoi's parents」and「Izayoi gone missing」were a「Paradigm Shift」in the history. Canaria felt guilty because she thought that it was caused by her action, but that was just an act that was included in the convergence point.

Izayoi's parents who were supposedly normal people should not be included in the「Paradigm Shift」.

"Don't tell me… The inventor of「Third Perpetual Machine」is."

"If we don't go to that era then we cannot confirm, but that's basically correct. It was judged from Izayoi and Croix's words that it is the University professor. Izayoi's parents were assassinated by an organization that targeted their research. Then at the same time they died, the development method of「Third Perpetual Machine」was distributed to an unknown number of people, hence becoming a「Black Box」."

—— It was actually like that. Although roughly understood the location of the inventor, as long as the convergence point「Death of Izayoi's parents」did not change, the inventor would not be concentrated to a single person. But the change of convergence point meant the change of Akashic Record. Even three digit could not do it easily. Even if Almighty could create, it could not easily change creation. Because it would contradict with a part of「Omnipotent Paradox」.

"Invention method distributed to an unknown number of people… That's how it is huh. Demon Lord「Aži Dakāha」is not like king of a country kind of single person or organization, but public mass huh!"

“That’s right. We had deducted it to be an authority holder like Zahhāk, but that at best is just admonition. As long as there is Super Weapon and authority, adding some evil intention… Any human can be corrupted into Aži Dakāha.”

Any human’s soul contained the possibility of Aži Dakāha.

The「Absolute Evil」flag he carried, was exactly the trial of humanity itself.

“Then the third point. ‘Sakamaki Izayoi saving the world, exists direct and indirect branching’. Based on my deduction, one of them is the chronicle that crossed the Dystopian eschatology, which is the chronicle Kasukabe Yō exists. The chronicles afterwards are destined to be peaceful… But we did not ‘cross’ Dystopia, but defeated it with ‘vanquish’ method, hence the chronicle she exists became infinitely thin.”

“...That’s it, ah. Even that Kōmei received「No Former」brand because of this huh. But, that’s wrong, wait a moment! Which means… What is it about?”

Mikado Tokuteru was overloaded with information and frowned while organizing them.

Lapko III slightly lowered her head after seeing him in that state, and clarified briefly.

“The content of inheritance that Sakamaki Izayoi saving the future, should have come from here.

‘The country or organization that obtained the development method of「Third Perpetual Machine」would make the world face the danger of annihilation’,

paired with ‘the existence of hero that obtained the same power of「Third Perpetual Machine」stops it’.

Then ‘If it is an indirect hero, he would save the world as an inventor’,

or ‘If is is a direct hero, he would save the world as an experimental body’.”

“Wha—Ex-Experimental body!? Of Perpetual Machine!?”

“Yes. Because since birth, his body had possessed「Third Perpetual Machine」— Using the information from surrounding environment, the final secret of humanity that creates energy from nothingness「3S.nano machine unit」.”

Karan, she knocked the bottle that contained the blood clot.

Reaching this far, Mikado Tokuteru was truly speechless from the shock.

“Then... then… this, is this it? Giving power to Demon Lord Dystopia in the past, then becoming the root of Demon Lord Aži Dakāha, all in this blood clot…?”

“Yes. If Sakamaki Izayoi inherited as the inventor of Perpetual Machine, the Perpetual Machine would be completed in the year 2120s. In this situation, the possibility of his

longevity exists, but I think that it would be his children that would save the world. But if he inherited as an experimental body and possess the Gift himself, it would only take several fraction of years to complete compared to the former. Because the finished product, had been lying dominant in his body long ago."

Izayoi once made Coppélia into a Perpetual Machine with「Adamantine」in「Underwood」, but the Gift inside him was the real reason why「End Emptiness」retreated. And because「End Emptiness」had seen through that, it acknowledged the clearance of Game and left.

"—— Kihahahaha!!! So this is how! This is how it is! As expected of Lapko-sensei, your deciphering is several million times deeper than my deduction."

Suddenly, along with a cheerful laughter, a tuxedo silhouette appeared in the parlour.

The two of them put up their guard instantly, but that laughter trait and that shade, they were both very familiar. Tokuteru stood up and opened his arms, welcoming this comrade in the past.

"Croix (lolicon)! Long time no see you bastard, are you still doing well!?"

"Kihahahaha! That's my line Indra (hitodzumacon)[8]! You already married a wife with such a nice butt, but your chastity is still zero! Playing with too much fire may burn you, you know!?"

"Oi oi don't scare me, didn't that make me shake in fear already, seriously! I am completely a human right now, so if my wife comes to hack me please help me out!"

That's right! The two brute gods laughed out loud shoulder to shoulder. They had not much relationship in their God Pantheon, but they were comrades that fought together in that desperate battle against Demon Lord Dystopia.

They had the destiny to fight against「Closed-off World」(Dystopia) until their own faith extinguish. Although they did not have inheritance on par with each other, they had acknowledged each other's spirit status.

Mainly womanizing and alcoholic, and non god-like behavior were their similarities.

"But I am so surprised. After defeating Dystopia, Dystopia's final spirit status actually rampaged… Croix know something?"

"No, it was a long time afterwards that I know. Probably around the time when Izayoi beaten about 90% of my spirit status, while I was resurrecting. Waking up after a long time, only then I realized the Perpetual Machine was almost complete. Seeing that caused me to think 'Ah ah, like that no matter if it's「Ideal World」(Utopia) or「Closed-off World」(Dystopia) both can work'."

The shady gentleman God showed a far-looking expression. Those two could not discern what he had seen in the near future.

But they knew the definition of「Ideal World」and「Closed-off World」were two sides of a coin.

Some philosopher gave a simple definition of「Ideal World」.

『That is a country whereby all citizens receive equal earning, building families with no differences, holding a little faith in their hearts, peacefully spend everyday.』

With that as foundation, adding the「Growth of Perpetual Machine that can mitigate energy problem and social competition 」and「The dwindling of Middle Age invention and liberalism」to the condition of the chronicle, it could result in the appearance of the strongest God-killer「Dystopia Demon Lord」. The appearance of God Pantheon that supported this Demon Lord was also one of the important reason, but the main reason was the usage of Perpetual Machine after all.

“The real「Ideal World」exists in the front which surpassed「Closed-off World」. We collected the history that created「Black Death」(Pest) and smallpox pandemic, used them to boost the growth of invention mindset, and with that method vanquished the chronicle convergence point… But seeing it now, we have only done a bad thing.”

“...That’s true. There may be other methods.”

Tokuteru, Croix and Lapko III all smiled bitterly, and maintained silence.

Because Demon Lord Dystopia was too strong. As a God-killer he was probably above Aži Dakāha. It was a last resort, there was no leeway or time to choose the method.

But this kind of matter, was unrelated to the sacrifices of the spreading disease. Their grudge would probably never disappear from the world.

“...Kihaha. Mah,「Last Embryo」had been exterminated. There are plenty time afterwards. Taking this chance, why don’t we think about other possible methods and chronicles.”

“That’s true. We must also consider the opinion from「Black Percher」.”

“Ah ah. Regarding this matter, that little girl is the witness of era. She must be bearing the possibility of being the pillar of that era. We must get her back from those guys no matter what.”

The trio nodded together.

In the past, they imposed their immaturity on humans.

Human being annihilated by human was only inevitable, but if they lost their lives due to divine interference, that was definitely wrong. Now was still a situation where decision could not easily be made, hence they could not move, but once everything reached a conclusion they would definitely carry out rescue, they swore as such.

What they could do now, was only watching over the whole story.

The days to the god/demon playground they hoped for in Little Garden should not be far away.

Even if he interfered, he would be told ‘You really do only unnecessary things this useless god!’, and nothing else.

...Mah, however.

(Wanting to save Pest is too late. These guys are still so naive.)

Zaza —— Some static noise leaked out.

Some poet (Noise) that was eavesdropping, mocked the oath of the gods and demons, then left that place. Because he was there the general situation had a major change, was matters many years later.

Part 3

By the way, Mikado Tokuteru who had been nagging projected his sight towards Croix as if he thought of something.

“Speaking of which pervert (Croix).”

“What is it affair maniac (Indra).”

“That nickname is too horrible so don’t seriously call me that. At least call me lust maniac… Then, you came here just for these?”

“How can it be Brother. It’s actually about the suggestion on Sun Authority Game, and Izayoi’s reward, just a little.”

“Hey. Is Tokuteru still awake?”

The two took a glance at the other side of the sliding door. Lapko III immediately vanished on the spot, Croix on the other hand morphed into the shadow of wardrobe.

Tokuteru instantly changed a drab uncle expression.

“Have you arrived? Come in!”

“Y-YES! Then, then excuse me!”

“Likewise, excuse me.”

“...Excuse me.”

Oya? Mikado Tokuteru let out a surprised voice.

Izayoi was not the only one to arrive in his room. Along with him were Kudō Asuka who had just changed into the bathrobe after bath, Queen's Knight Faceless who seemed to be having a bad mood, and Kuro Usagi who was so nervous her usamimi had been shaking non-stop.

Once Kuro Usagi pulled open the sliding door, she knelt down on the spot.

"This, this, this time we troubled you to descend yourself, I thank, thank you from the bottom of my heart! It's nothing, nothing significant, but at least allow me to pour a cup for you!"

"Oh oh, the rumored 「Moon Rabbit」 huh. I have heard about it. The person here is only the sponsor, the human Mikado Tokuteru. Don't be so nervous!"

Seeing the stiff Kuro Usagi, Tokuteru could not help but smile bitterly. He could understand her being nervous before her Main God, but there should be a limit.

Izayoi was also amused.

"Mah, at least he is indebted to you. Since for the sake of saving you this Main God,"

"Izayoi ah. Talkative man will lose value you know."

Tokuteru stared at Izayoi, asking him to keep quiet.

But hearing this topic, Kudō Asuka also responded with a subtle expression.

"So… You are really the one who saved Kuro Usagi from the Purgatory."

"Ahwawawawa! Ho-How should I apologize…! Kuro Usagi obviously broke the rule, using the armor and spear at the same time…!!!"

"It's fine, didn't I say it's fine already! And it was originally me who owed 「Moon Rabbit」! That is just returning the favor! OK, don't talk about those gloomy topics, hurry up and pour me some wine!"

Mikado Tokuteru scratched his head awkwardly, then brought out a wine cup.

Even if he was used to getting despised by female, he was not used to receiving gratitude. Izayoi looked at his appearance and giggled, but this topic ended there. Teasing was interesting, but getting awkward would be meaningless.

Faceless who had been silent the whole time, glanced sideway at Asuka, sarcastically spoke.

"...Always saved by others, you."

"That, that kind of thing…!"

...Might be real. Asuka reluctantly gritted her teeth.

Part 4

Izayoi, Asuka and Faceless walked to the center of the room and sat on the cushion.

Kuro Usagi sat next to Tokuteru, nervously pouring wine. Izayoi and Asuka talked about the important matter while looking at her.

“Speaking of which, it seems Aži Dakāha is the one that destroyed the hometown of「Moon Rabbit」. He is defeated now, have you thought about taking this chance to rebuild it? I feel that Kuro Usagi also has the corresponding achievement.”

“Wa-Wait a minute, Izayoi-san!”

“Umu, after things reach a conclusion I do want to rebuilt it. But the Rabbit species has mostly dispersed to various lands. The ones I can grasp including this girl only amount to three.”

“Eeeh? Main God also don’t know the accurate location of his familiars?”

“Not like this, if hidden in barrier or other God Pantheon, then I also can’t do anything. On the other hand, if the situation is not like the above I can understand the rough location. Even if it’s the Outer World.”

Hearing Mikado Tokuteru’s words, Asuka’s eyes glittered and asked.

“This kind of thing, other Main Gods are the same?”

“Of course. This kind of thing definitely can understand… Ah ah, so that’s it.”

“Tokuteru showed an understanding expression and nodded, holding his chin.

“You want to bring the old「 」members back from the Outer World, so this is how it is… Umu, looking carefully, this little girl’s spirit status, indeed mixed with many acquaintances’ blood.”

Mikado Tokuteru sized up Asuka carefully while rubbing his chin. Asuka was nervous because her origin was seen through from a glance, but still continued the question just now.

“I am convinced of your wisdom. I have also heard about my origin from my servant Amal. Hence I want to leave the Community temporarily, tracing Kudō family’s lineage to save the comrades.”

Asuka’s suggestion shocked Tokuteru a little.

If she was going to leave the Community and journey to the Outer World, it would probably take up considerable number of years. In fact this would be no different from leaving the Community.

“...Asuka. Did you plan the trip after obtaining the understanding of your comrades?”

“Yes. Although I have not obtained everyone’s agreement… I understand that this will be a harsh journey. I, deeply felt the powerlessness from this battle. For the sake of training myself, I decided to leave the Community.”

Which meant it was a warrior’s training journey, something like that.

Asuka was definitely not weak, but her power could be greatly limited depending on situation. She felt that continuing like that would one day hinder her comrades.

“Kuro Usagi. Have you also agreed?”

“...YES. Of course I will feel lonely. But Kuro Usagi does not have the right to interfere with their paths. I wish to accept their own expectations, and support their backs.”

“That so. Then Izayoi?”

“Ojō-sama already said like that, even if I stop her she would still leave.”

“Ara, you sure are understanding.”

The two grinned lightly. Izayoi heard before, she planned on leaving her home even before the summon.

How to stop this kind of crazy girl?

“Speaking of which, you mentioned it in the past. About wanting to see Halloween after you leave your home.”

“Ei. That is a dream from little after all. I will visit「Halloween Queen」one day.”

“...Please wait. That, what is that about?”

At this moment, Faceless interrupted for some reason.

Asuka and Izayoi looked at her in astonishment.

“You mean… The matter about visiting the Queen? That is before coming here.”

“No. It’s even earlier. If you didn’t get summoned, didn’t you plan to go somewhere after leaving your home?”

Hering an unexpected question, Asuka blinked.

“You ask where… Just going outside to learn new things, see Halloween Festival only…”

Not understand why he asked that, Asuka showed a confused look. Faceless’ behavior was just that strange.

That appearance was completely different from the time in hot spring just now.

Displaying the shakened expression that could even be felt even with the mask, really unlike her.

She held her chin and entered a deep thought, bitterly muttered.

“...Is that so. Queen and Kudō family, is destined to have connection like this huh.”

“Faceless?”

“Nothing, excuse me. Back to main topic. How does Mikado-dono view that matter — going to Outer World to save comrades of「No Name」?”

“Umu… Mah, if borrowing Queen’s power, resummoning the exiled is also not impossible. Just that we need to make use of many Paradox Game loopholes…”

Explaining was too complicated, very troublesome. Tokuteru threw Izayoi a glance with such meaning, hence Izayoi took over the topic like a bother.

“If Little Garden is really a realm that all possibilities exist, then「Comrades that cannot return to Little Garden」and「Comrades that can return to Little Garden」these two completely opposite truth existing together should be fine. There should not be any timing problem right?”

“Umu. The Paradox Game that would become a problem in this case is not「Time Paradox」, but the saving side’s「Liar Paradox」. Let’s skip the detailed explanation, the main point is that every time period only has one chance, if someone who observed the death of a comrade exists in Little Garden then it’s impossible to save that comrade you know?”

“Once is enough. How can I abandon them when there is a possibility?”

Wanting to let the children that had supported「No Name」reunite with their parents. Izayoi was not the only one who had thought that. She had always hoped that Lily and the elder children group’s sacrifice could be rewarded one day.

“If possible, I hope that Tokuteru-san can act as the middleman, let me get an audience with Queen…”

Uu, Tokuteru let out a sad cry.

“Queen… Queen ah. Sorry, I have never met「Queen Halloween」.”

“Is that so?”

“I heard that she is a beauty, so I also wanted to get closer, but I had been on bad terms with Sun God since the past. If there is a middleman I can still make a conversation… Ah ah, like that. So Queen’s Knight is here.”

Everyone’s attention directed to Faceless. Bringing her here should be to request her as a middleman. Kuro Usagi pleaded Mikado Tokuteru while pouring wine for him.

“I know this is a rude request. But even if the Queen is a Demon Lord, if Ind-”

“Nn?”

“Mi-Mikado Tokuteru-sama’s request should not be refused. For the sake of our comrades, can you grant your majesty to us…?”

Fumu, Mikado Tokuteru showed a thinking pose.

“Since it’s not others, but the request of the heroes. Accepting this kind of thing is also fine. Since Queen’s Knight can act as the middleman, conversation should not be a problem.”

“Thank...thank you very much! With that the return of comrades can finally be realized!”

Kuro Usagi straightened her usamimi in happiness. Although experiencing the long hardship, she could finally receive the reward. After that they just needed to retake their Community name, the Community three years ago could also revive.

But Faceless interrupted Kuro Usagi’s joy, suddenly stood up and said.

“—— No, please wait.”

“? Faceless-san?”

“Although I agreed to assist before coming here… Please let me correct myself. I cannot provide assistance now.”

Oh, Mikado Tokuteru let out a surprised voice. Lapko III and Croix that had disappeared also realized. Those three, saw through this masked girl’s true identity with a glance.

“It won’t be free, you did say that right, Queen’s Knight. Then what kind of compensation is needed for you to be the middleman?”

“No need for compensation… Actually, I planned to silently leave Little Garden. But since I discovered the method to clear the Game, then I cannot give up my objective.”

That voice contained a passion that could not be imagined from her icy aura in the past. The burning mask represented her emotion right now.

She put her hand on the mask, stared at Asuka with hostility.

“Kudō Asuka. I request a duel with you. If you can win me I will arrange for you to get an audience with Queen.”

“...Wha?”

“Please allow me to borrow the「Adamantine Forge」as the stage and rules. Luckily we both made it to the finals.”

“Wait, wait a moment! I did think about deciding a winner between us, but telling me that so suddenly…!!!”

Despite winning in the「Hippocamp Rider」, she did not feel that it was a victory with her ability. Opponent was「No Name」with teamwork, with just her alone it was an obvious result. And she was saved many times by her, hence she hoped that one day she could decide a winner in a one to one duel.

But towards Asuka’s thoughts, Faceless replied with an uncontrolled laughter.

“I mentioned just now. The reason I saved you, is also because of my own reason. —— Now, I will tell you that reason.”

The voice filled with rage and grudge, caused everyone at the scene to take their stance.

The words just now contained obvious killing intent. The strong killing intent that she constantly let out seemed as if she could begin a massacre anytime, even if it would twist the space. Faceless took off her calm self along with the mask.

The real appearance beneath the mask, caused Asuka and Kuro Usagi to let out a cry.

“Wha…!?”

“...Liar.”

Karan, the sound of the mask falling onto the floor.

——「Face of the Dead」(Faceless). Understanding the meaning of this knight title, Asuka looked at her with a deathly pale face —— No, her own mirror image.

“—— A very simple matter. If you were killed by someone before I defeat you, I will be troubled. Because if I don’t defeat you by myself… Kudō Ayato (Faceless), would not be born…!!!”

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1 Akashic records are said to be some records (compendium) of mostly events stored in the “astral plane”.↩

2 Shāhnāmeh (شاهنامه, the Book of Kings) is the longest epic poem written by a single poet: Ferdowsî (فردوسی).
It's the central work of the Persian culture. It tells the mythical and historical event of the Persian Empire. This work is also important because it was written in early Modern Persian, so all the Avestan names changed. Aži Dakāha changed in Zahhāk. Ferdowsî also change

some of the Avestan histories (see next note).↩

3 In the Shāhnāmeh, Zahhāk fought against the now-corrupted king Jamshīd (جمشید, in Avestan: Yima) hence the "Evil God used treachery to obtain the crown". When the Evil God,
Ahriman (Av: Angra Mainyu) asked kissed Zahhāk on his two shoulders. "two black snakes grew out of Zahhāk's shoulders. They could not be surgically removed, for as soon as one snake-head had been cut off, another took its place.". Mind that snake are related to dragon, hence this change in Mondaiji.↩

4 Fereydūn (Av: Θraētaona). See also my previous note. He imprisoned him in Harā Bərəzaitī or in the Alborz Mountains.↩

5 Jibrīl (جبریل) is a famous angel in Abrahamic monotheism, he's also called Gabriel in the Torah and the Bible. He's an angel (or an archangel to be precise) who typically serves as a messenger sent from God to certain people. This didn't happen either in the Shāhnāma.↩

6 Mmmh, that's not really exact. But globally the idea is the same. In Zoroastrianism and in Hinduism this time will be hard for the righteous, and the wickedness will be the "norm". Look on Wikipedia: Frashokereti (fraš̄o.kərəti) and Kali Yuga (कलियुग).↩

7 西郷 (Western Village) and 西業(Karma of the West) have the same pronunciation.↩

8 Hitodzumacon:Hitodzuma (ひとづま, 人妻) means married woman. And "con" is for complex. So... married woman complex↩

Chapter 7

Part 1

「Adamantine Forge」- Day of finals.

There was a giant barrier for projecting the performance and the seats for spectators.

Going up on stage, Kuro Usagi smiled and waved towards the audience.

"Finally, just half an hour is left before the start of finals of 「Adamantine Forge」! The judge this time would be Kuro Usagi from 「No Name」! Mikado Tokuteru-sama from the three digit community 「Tōiriten」 that is here as the guest judge will be commenting on it!"

——OHHHHhhhhhhh!!!

With the Kuro Usagi on stage, the whole mine was filled with cheerful shouts.

She wasn't here as an official judge of the 「Thousand Eyes」 but that was no concern to the fans. The usual banner was also swaying.

As she returned back to the place for reporters, she was greeted by broadly grinning Sakamaki Izayoi from the wing of the stage.

"As popular as ever, eh? Aren't 70% of the audience males? This is that huh? The gift produced by Shiroyasha?"

"Ugh..... It is frustrating to say but YES." Clothing of Shiroyasha-sama can't be taken off because of the demands from fans. Since it brought the opportunity to get money for our food, I couldn't deny it."

"Right? I have no choice but to honestly recognize the ability of the one who made this skirt."

Yahaha, Izayoi laughed while catching and raising her skirt while Kuro Usagi knocked his hand off. This skirt that was made with gift of ‘can't see what should be seen', firmly grasped the hearts of male customers and didn't let them go.

Shiroyasha's achievements were countless. If she hadn't invented this skirt it's possible that 「No Name」 could have fallen long ago, and the problem children would never been summoned.

After exchanging the usual things two or three times, Izayoi got down to business.

"But that masked knight sure surprised me. Who would have thought that she was a blood relative of Ojō-sama that was supposed to have died."

What's more, it was not just normal blood relative. The face that was hidden under the

mask, gave off the intimate feel to anyone who looked at it. Thinking back about her face, Izayoi remembered Asuka's speech.

"'Should have sister'.....was it? Remembering it now, I now understand what made me anxious. When you talk about sisters, usually, you say it differently.

—— "I should have an older sister."

—— "I should have a little sister."

.....or something like that. Despite this, Ojō-sama said that she should have sister."

That's right. Kudō Asuka was not able to talk about the fact that she was deprived of a sister. In other words, the meaning behind that was that her sister died before being born and determining which was older and which younger.

Meaning – Kudō Asuka had a twin.

"With this, one of the mysteries about Ojō-sama has been solved. The Gift and body of Divine Spirit..... Does that mean that those two spirit levels became twins and got split?"

"Yes. Perhaps if we think about the historical influence, I think we can conclude that Faceless-sama who had a strong corporeal capabilities died."

Kuro Usagi made a docile face as well and folded her arms.

「Halloween」 is a festival when the boundary of stars is weakened because of season changes, and deceased return from the land of the dead. Some time ago, she herself presumed, that due to some circumstances, the spirit level of Faceless ended up in Queen's hands.

If Asuka ended up not getting summoned in Little Garden, then she should have headed towards the Great Britain – the place where Halloween originated from. And it was expected that some kind of Paradigm would be caused at that land.

"Then regardless the existence of 「No Name」, 「Kudō Asuka」 would definitely repeat that action. Or perhaps like the death of Nobunaga, fit the history in the form of a convergence point. Looks like we were right when we thought that she appeared with the 「Ningen-sengen」 (Humanity Declaration) that was issued at the end of World War 2."

"Yes. However, for Asuka-san to manifest as a living God of Imperial household, there is one thing that is essential by all means."

".....The blood of direct descendant of Imperial household, right?"

Descendant of former 「No Name」.

Paradigm shift of WWII.

Blood of the Imperial descendant and「Ningen-sengen」.

Perhaps there's just one place in history of Japan where the chronicle of all these events advances without contradictions. And if that chronicle becomes clear, It might also be possible to go save the former members of「No Name」.

"...But if our hypothesis is correct, then could the actual form of the Gift that Faceless seems to be hiding actually be that outrageous divine sword?"

"YES. Even in the divine sword category, there might only be 3 swords that exceeds it. At any rate, it's a divine sword that travelled from the oldest till the latest times on a single cosmology. The density of the spirit level of the existence that holds this sword has no equal. If it ends up in hands of the Imperial member that carries divinity, then it's hard to imagine just how powerful it will grow. As a matter of fact, it can even exceed Yō-san's「Genome Tree」"

To that degree? – Izayoi put a hand on his chin and honestly pondered.

"...Well, the audience is big here. I want to believe that masked knight-sama won't do anything unreasonable in this game where murder is strictly forbidden."

"Well, who knows. We won't know that unless we confirm the contents of the trial that Queen assigned to her."

In contrast to serious Izayoi, Kuro Usagi answered with slightly lighter tone.

.....It was a bit unexpected.

After all's said and done, she seems unusually composed. Usually, It would be Kuro Usagi who would panic and Izayoi would be calming her down, but this time it was totally opposite of that.

"Hmm… That's too optimistic. If perchance, that masked knight-sama decides to kill Ojō-sama, then even I might not be able to protect her."

"Ayaya, that's sounds different from usual Izayoi-san. If you talk like that, you might miss the victory you know?"

Usausa! – shaking her usamimi, Kuro Usagi showed a satisfied smile.

Izayoi narrowed his eyes and asked again.

".....Eeh. That implying talk. In that case, what would be the usual me?"

"I can answer that without fail! If it's usual Izayoi-san, he would say something like ‘Divine sword of divinity holder Imperial member you say? HA! Good, good, that's more like it! I'll take care of that bout of Ojō-sama and her sister!!!’

...And with that, you would surely stand before the two with the intentions to make them

reconcile or something like that."

At that point, she was already grinning with enjoyment.

The head of the strongest problem children would surely have raged from the current tension.

At the very least, if it was Izayoi from before the fight with Aži Dakāha, then there's no way he would be satisfied from just looking at such amusing quarrel among sisters.

But the current Izayoi was not able to get heated up like that.

".....Well, it would be thrilling if that could be done. But, seeing their faces, there was no atmosphere to be able to do that."

"Fufu, I understand."

Usausa! – Kuro Usagi shook her usamimi. Even Izayoi could not clearly describe the changes that were happening within him at the moment.

This was because in the past 17 years of his life, such changes never happened before.

And Kuro Usagi began to notice the changes in the heart of Izayoi –in the hearts of all three problem children.

(After overcoming a great battle, everyone ended up at the crossroads of life. However, becoming an adult and becoming wiser are two completely different things.)

At this rate, the three of them who are at the pinnacle of talents of the whole world might decay. That alone is one thing that's must not happen. Especially because they have such emotional period, they must acquire as much experience as possible.

Hence Kuro Usagi understood.

That the time to accomplish the final responsibility as the summoned ones in this Little Garden of Fighting Gods and Buddhas.

Part 2

After finishing preparing for the fight, Kasukabe Yō had a meal and was now quietly waiting for the start in the waiting room. Having not taken anyone as a second, there was no one in the room aside from her.

As she quietly stared at the clear sky, she released a small sigh.

".....It's no good. So much has happened at once that my head is not working properly."

Yō hanged her head. Becoming the leader of 「No Name」 and Great Alliance was unbelievable talk alone, and yet, Asuka who she considered as one of the closest friends talked about leaving 「No Name」 and acting independently.

She said she'd return one day, but surely they would be parted for a very long time.

For Yō who was thinking of challenging Gift Games together every day from now on, after they overcame this death struggle that talk was out of her expectations.

After all, even if someone from the three decided to go on a journey, she surely thought that it would've been anyone but Asuka.

(I understood that matters concerning Izayoi were strange. Therefore, I thought that he might go for a little journey to gain combat skills.)

It was obvious that something happened in battle with Aži Dakāha.

Even Yō who was indifferent about others has realized that something happened. That's why, if by any chance Izayoi would decide to leave 「No Name」, she was determined to protect the community herself at that time. And yet, who would have thought that It would be Asuka who would leave for journey before him.

(.....Rather I also want to accompany her)

Journey in outside world, and what's more, between various parts of history. There would also be many dangers. And it would be better to have more comrades. The state of world also seems to have stabilized, so even without me alone, wouldn't 「No Name」 be safe....?

At the moment she was thinking that, there was a knock on the door of waiting room.

"Yō-san. Do you have a minute?"

"Kuro Usagi...? Yes, come in."

Kasukabe Yō got puzzled from the sudden visit.

Kuro Usagi entered the waiting room and asked about her condition with a slight smile.

"How are you? Your condition is perfect right?"

"Who knows. The body condition is good, but my head is spinning around."

Haahh, she released a sigh. She probably didn't think that she'd be worrying over this so much. Kuro Usagi also showed a strained smile.

"I’m worried in my heart. But Kuro Usagi recommended Yō-san as the leader because I truly think you are suited for it, you know?"

".....Why? Even if Asuka is going on a journey, Izayoi is staying right? Then, I think it would

be good to entrust it to him."

"Of course not. From the three of you, Izayoi-san is the only person who is not cut out to be a leader."

She declared it with a smile. With this, even Yō was surprised.

"W-Why? There's no way Izayoi can't do what I can do....."

"That right. Ability wise, there's potential. Surely, after 10 years, Izayoi-san would undoubtedly be called a wise leader. ...However, having a potential and becoming one are two separate things. After all, Izayoi-san has the freest spirit among you problem children."

What supported「No Name」until now was solely Izayoi-san's kindness. If they depended on him even after this, then someday their paths might part.

"Truthfully speaking, even though he is the one who can live freely the most..... Izayoi-san has big troubles now. But if he speaks about them, then feels that he would end up hurting many people. Truly, after defeating Aži Dakāha, he seems to have screamed:

『I didn't want to win like this –!』"

".....?!"

Yō's eyes were dyed from surprise. She probably never thought that Izayoi was worried about that. It was a reason unthinkable for the usual Izayoi.

But it was not a simple matter for the person in question. Thanks to the fact that Kuro Usagi's usamimi, and along with it, her「Authority of Judge Master」also returned, she clearly understood what exactly happened inside the game. Hence she knew. That for Sakamaki Izayoi, that final attack was nothing but disgrace.

"Disgraceful victory… Isn't it? For example, Yō-san, you are aware of the great hero who obtained the sun armor and the spear of certain victory, right?"

"By sun armor you mean the Gift that Kuro Usagi has right?"

"YES. I heard that the great duel of Sun God's son Karṇa and Indra's son Arjuna was very similar to that."

Yes – Once, Indra granted a disgraceful victory to his own son. Oddly, the cause of it was the Divine Spear and Sun Armor that Kuro Usagi possessed.

It was the battle of two great heroes among the legends of India that boasted from its popularity.

That was the legend about the son of War God Arjuna[1] and the son of Sun God Karṇa[2].

"Indra stole the Sun Armor with trickery[3], but it would be fine it it was just that. Both Izayoi-san and Yō-san would find it unacceptable to hold back even if Aži Dakāha was not in perfect condition right?"

".....Yes."

She assented with a small nod. Naturally, Indra himself regretted about the matter.

Because the from the overprotectiveness towards his son, the Divine Spirit disgraced a great hero.

Because that was the act unworthy for a War God, he was criticized for doing something so cowardly. But, if it was just that, then his son might not have ended up detesting him to that point.

But the reason he thought this victory was disgraceful, was the fact that it was a victory assured from the start as a result of the curses of his half-siblings and father Gods.

Arjuna who became aware of this after the fight, tightly held the head of his sibling Karṇa and shouted:

"——Indra! O Great Father of mine! Are you satisfied now that you protected your dignity?"

He roared towards the sky as he shed tears while embracing the freshly severed head of his sibling.

Undoubtedly, both of them hated each other. They shared all the honor and dishonor they had. And in their entire lives, they spirits burned for the sake of not losing only to each other.

Against such dreadful and powerful opponent, they could only clash after betting their lives on the line.

The fated siblings clearly understood this.

Loading numerous resentments, respects in the duel that they held, they understood each other better and better with every clash. And sadly, perhaps both of them understood in which way the scales of victory was inclining.

Because the abilities of Sun God's son Karṇa exceeded that of War God's son Arjuna's.

Therefore, it was strange that at the end, it was not Arjuna's head that was severed. Heaven did not allow such absurdity. It couldn't afford to allow it. The duel of those two great heroes that was observed by millions of warriors – In the end, was stained by the Gods.

Although the result of the duel was determined, Arjuna didn't raise the shouts of victory. Instead he quietly hugged the head of his half-brother, and glared towards the sky with ghastly expression.

".....I wanted to kill him. Even if it was not allowed. Certainly, I swore to raise his severed

head, however, I never! Never wanted to win like this!!!"

After the end of the death match, he who was one of the greatest hero from the Indian legends, cried for the half-brother who he should have detested. Throughout the battle, he was well aware of the curses that Karṇa received for his various deeds.

From the beautiful brightness of his sword, spear and bow, he clearly understood Karṇa's true character.

And exactly because of that purity of his soul, he discarded the Sun Armor, and used the Divine Spear that could only be used once because of some stranger.

Despite the fact that if not for his curses, he surely was a nice guy, just like a sun.

Perhaps, he could even share the same glory while standing shoulder to shoulder with the similar comrades.

But that future was the one thing that was not destined for the siblings that were dragged into the war of the Gods[4].

"Izayoi-san knew. .....He knew that Izayoi Sakamaki was no match for Aži Dakāha. Yes, even though he was no match for him, he ended up killing him. Surely, that act brought sadness."

At the time of final attack against Aži Dakāha – The Divine Spear couldn't pierce Izayoi thanks to the Gift of Leo that was bestowed to him by His Highness. But Izayoi was determined to follow the same strategy regardless of existence of that Gift. He probably thought that this great Demon Lord had to be taken down by the hands of a true hero.

Use every power.

Use up your resourcefulness.

Show me your courage, and become a bright sword that would pierce my heart.

Pierce the heart with a blow that had all the courage and wisdom put into it. He embraced the conviction that he became a hero worthy for taking down this great Demon Lord.

And Aži Dakāha himself should have been holding to that wish. If he didn't, he wouldn't not have told such oracle in his dying moments.

『.....There is no need to be ashamed. If you don't know, then learn it now. That trembling is called fear』

Putting his life on the line, he caught the spear thrown by the comrade and attacked the Demon Lord. If he attained that victory with unmeasured bravery, than at that time, that fear itself would've been a reward.

— But, for Izayoi, it was different.

『That is so. And do not forget. Even while shivering with fear, the leg moves forward. — That is called courage!』

— It's wrong……!!!

.....It's wrong, Aži Dakāha.....!!!

Believing he was defeated by a true hero, the Demon Lord vanished satisfied. But the real reason Izayoi was shaking was not that. It was not fear that made him shiver.

No matter how much he thought about that battle, Izayoi was supposed to die from that spear throw.

He couldn't remember just how many times he saw his figure in mind, scattering apart after accepting that challenge with his body. Because in truth, Izayoi who challenged him with brute courage was supposed to lose to the Demon Lord and die.

At that time, His Highness lend him the strength. And Jack created a change for victory while betting his life.

These factors didn't exist in the make-up of the game that Izayoi assumed.

All of that was nothing but interruptions from the wheel of fate for the sake of making Izayoi attain victory.

Hence, that shivering… was from shame. Izayoi shivered from the shame that he bore after gaining victory against the true Demon Lord with underhanded methods.

And he cried out of frustration. The guilt towards the allies and enemy was intolerable.

If there were heroes worthy to be called victors there, they were no other than the ones who put their lives on the line, and changed the gears of fate creating that situation.

It was Kudō Asuka, Kasukabe Yō, Saurian Demon King, Roc Demon King, Jack, Mandra and many comrades who lost their lives – They were the true heroes.

Izayoi Sakamaki...was just an outsider. He was just a thief that stole the achievement from the safety zone in that final decisive battle.

He was just a spectator, witnessing the shouts of victory that resounded far across the distance.

The one who killed the Demon Lord was Izayoi, but… The one who was defeated by the Demon Lord was Izayoi alone.

"......In order for Izayoi-san to win, something has changed. Because of that extraordinarily powerful will, he was made to be a hero. Izayoi-san himself understands that, albeit unconsciously."

"....."

"He needs time to think about it. Whether he lives as a hero he was made out to be, or chooses a different path from the legend that was imposed on him. Kuro Usagi thinks that this problem is surely not something that would be solved by him staying with the「No Name」. I wish for him to experience the vast world that is Little Garden, to better understand his troubles and his own self, and then turn all his regrets into the source of encouragement... But for that, it's necessary to do a ceremony. And the one who can do it, is no one but Yō-san."

"No one but me?"

Kuro Usagi looked at Kasukabe Yō with earnest eyes.

Taking her hand, Kuro Usagi began to tell her the details that were loaded with all her anxiety and expectations.

Part 3

— And, the time has come to raise the curtains.

The audience seats were full without even a single empty space.

This is what would be called a flood of customers.

As usual the fox girl Lily was running around as a saleswoman, and selling goods while her kitsunemimi were twitching. This time the other children from the senior group were also selling along with her.

From now on the games hosted by「No Name」themselves would increase. And Kuro Usagi wanted for them to get even a bit of experience.

(Witnessing the fight of Izayoi-sama and others, kids who might decide to become players might appear in future. For that to happen, I have to give my best!)

Hyokon! - Lily's kitsunemimi jumped up as she made a fist.

At the moment she had about half of the goods sold.

A single gong reverberated, marking the start of the game.

『Thank you for waiting! Before starting the final game of「Adamantine Forge」, the new leader of us「No Name」, Player Kasukabe Yō will do an opening speech!』

—OOOOhhhhhhhhh!!!

In the middle of loud cheers, Kasukabe Yō stepped forward. Getting on stage Kasukabe Yō took up the microphone, and faced the audience with unusually tensed expression.

Looking at the audience Kasukabe Yō, albeit hesitantly, looked at the place where flags of the hosts were hanging.

「Six Scars」, 「Perseus」, and also the red flag that had the traces of name of the old 「 」.

Although her father was the leader of 「No Name」, becoming their new leader didn't feel real.

—Nevertheless.

The heart of Kasukabe Yō began to throb from a different matter. The condition that Kuro Usagi proposed to her cleared up her currently messed up head, and more than anything... It was the most interesting proposal.

Under the weight of her throbbing chest, Yō took the microphone and started her speech:

『I..... am not the strongest person among the 「No Name」. Even now, I'm not confident that I was truly useful in the fight against Aži Dakāha. I believe that this victory was possible only because of people other than us, who put their lives on the line.』

"_____"

It's not like that – from the audience voices were raised. Everyone who fought along with her knew very well just how bravely Kasukabe Yō fought.

『Originally, the person who should have become a leader should be from the other two. But one of them is going on a journey alone to save comrades, and another one who is stronger than me, lost sight of his own self, doesn't know what to do and didn't take the leader's position.』

".....?"

Turbulent atmosphere that drifted even reached the audience.

Yō frantically continued the awkward speech.

『If I, whose ability is not recognized become the leader of 「No Name」, then who knows what kinds of grudges will pile up after this when we create The Great Alliance. That's why, I want to clear everything right here.』

The final words were unmistakably directed towards Izayoi.

Just once, Yō looked back at Kuro Usagi.

『Kuro Usagi. There might not be a way turn back after this, so…..re you sure this is alright?』

"YES! Now go and say it loudly!"

Kuro Usagi answered with a wink. Lately, she has become very reliable. Surely that has to be because she gained more self-confidence, after receiving the divine protection from Indra.

Attracted to that smile, Yō also smiled back.

Perhaps this could be the final prank that three of them would do together.

Then they should give their all. To stand tall without any regrets.

For Kudō Asuka to depart for journey.

For Kasukabe Yō to become a new leader.

And for Sakamaki Izayoi to break his shackles once more.

In order to reach their souls, Kasukabe Yō shouted with all she had.

『Let's have a match, Sakamaki Izayoi!!! If I win in this Gift Game, then until you fix that face that lost all energy from defeat...! You would not return under the flag of 「No Name」!!!』

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1 Arjuna (अर्जुन) is the son of Indra. He is the considered as the best archer of his time, Karṇa being his rival. He was the third of the Pandava (पाण्डव) brothers.↩

2 Karṇa (कर्ण) was the king of Anga, and was the only one as strong as Arjuna (अर्जुन). He was the son of Sūrya (सूर्य) a solar deity in Hinduism. He was the best friend of Duryodhana (दुर्योधन), and so fought with the Kaurava (कौरव) side.↩

3 It's part of the Mahābhārata, in the Karṇa Parva (कर्ण पर्व). Karṇa had the Kavach (armour) and Kundal (ear-rings) which made him invulnerable against enemies. Knowing that Indra made a plan to take that: he disguised as a poor Brahmin. Sūrya (सूर्य) warned Karṇa, but he said that he had to respect the host custom. Indra asked for the Kavach and Kundal as alms. Karṇa said he recognize Indra, and Indra took his normal form ashamed. Karṇa however gave

them to him. See Prelude to war on Wikipedia.↩

4 FYI this is the Author-sama, as usual, changing a bit the myth. In the story the most important point was that Arjuna won in a "disgraceful" manner: he killed him from the back while he was unarmed.
About the curses: 1) He will "lose the knowledge when he needed it most when fighting against an equal warrior" 2) (because he killed a cow) "he would become helpless and die in the same way the innocent cow had become, by his chariot wheels getting stuck in the ground" 3) "at a very crucial moment in battle, his chariot wheel would be trapped". See Quora & Wikipedia for more.
He was indeed killed that way. His chariot wheel was trapped in mud, Arjuna tried to kill him failed and was unconscious, Karṇa tried to extract his wheel, Arjuna woke up and killed him in the back.↩

Chapter 8

Part 1

The sound of a large gong reverberated throughout the the entire cave. The large gong that signaled the start of the Game, resounded through every part of the cave and continued to spread beyond it. The wild animals and birds weren't aware of what will happen afterwards. Even so, they would still probably be regretting with their lives regardless even if they were.

Kudō Asuka displayed a bitter smile after Kasukabe Yō's speech and plunged forward into the cave with a renewed determination.

(Izayoi-kun and Kasukabe-san will start immediately. I also shouldn't fall behind.)

Faceless —The girl who calls herself Kudō Ayato. There was a need to settle things with her.

Thinking back, Asuka was probably always aware of her.

Ever since she was rescued from the Titans at the waterfall of the giant tree, there had been many opportunities to exchange words with her. Her serpent sword, that easily dashed in the air, had saved Kudō Asuka many times, but at the same time, drew her at a corner with dilemma. Her eyes got attracted to those special moves for over countless times.

She expected that under her mask, there was a face full of purity.

.....Despite that, fighting in that form was full of irony.

Advancing in the cave dyed with various colors, someone who looked like her split image stood in her way.

"....."

A clink of preparing a linked sword was heard.

Faceless already prepared to fight. Asuka was already inside her attack range. The attack of the serpent sword was about to chop off Asuka's head.

Aware of that, Kudō Asuka asked her… whose face was like a split image of her's, the final question.

"Can I ask one thing?"

"——Go ahead."

"You said..... You wanted to leave Little Garden. What does that mean? Aren't you planning on receiving Queen’s next order and accomplish it?"

Asuka asked while guessing her reply. As always, Faceless' reply was quick.

"No. That was a lie. If I don't clear the game with Queen before the time limit, I would be sent to the outside world as the Queen's vanguard. They would take away my personality and reincarnate me. And that time limit is not that far."

"Then, why do you need all this?"

"There were others aside from you at that place. ...Isn't this reason enough?"

Asuka silently accepted the ambiguous answer she received. As a fellow comrade in arms, Asuka quickly realized that she was worrying about「No Name」.

In that case, words were now deemed unnecessary. She already clearly understood with what reasons did this masked knight faced this battle.

.....In a way, the situation was inevitable for her as well.

Would she kill Asuka and begin a new life?

Or would she go to the outside world as the Queen's vanguard?

She only had these two choices. To save the personality that is 'Faceless', she has no choice but to kill Asuka.

"I understood it well. You are truly dead, resent the living person that is me, and want to snatch away my spirit level. Yes, what a shameless usurper. The title of Queen's knight is wasted on you as well. Certainly, there are many painful things in the outside world, but not to the point that I would hand over my life for someone else. ...Today is not Halloween, but.... I pray for your happiness in your next life, Ayato-san."

Even if it crushes all the affection and emotions she accumulated in this Little Garden, she still had to face this battle head on. If Kudō Asuka can… She will just take all those things back by force.

To that indomitable spirit, Faceless merely answered with an angry look in her eyes.

"Those are supposed to be my words. To be honest, I can't endure looking at your shameful sight knowing that you have almost the same face as me. The moment I saw your miserable ability at the time during the waterfall hunting game, I kept feeling guilty that I always resented that mere level of bitter enemy."

"Y-You asked for it.....!!!"

Her cheeks were dyed red with shame. Indeed, was her sigh from back then due to disappointment?

If so, then it was necessary to make her reconsider her opinion right now.

——On the day when the boundary of life and death breaks,

The living welcome the dead, and the dead drag the living with them.

This is a banquet truly fitting for the entertainment of Gods and Demons. Asuka, who saw a scene appropriate for the banquet of Gods and Buddhas, took out her gift card.

But at the moment she did that, the serpent sword came at her at terrifying speeds.

"——!!?"

In Asuka's eyes, that attack was truly like a flash of death. She wasn't even able to see hand’s afterimages, so there's no way she would be able to avoid this linked sword moving at divine speeds.

The metaphor "Storm and Stress" perfectly fitted that attack. No mercy shown to the opponent.

If it was Asuka from several months ago, she would have already lost her head from this attack.

If not for this fortress — This impenetrable fortress of Goddess「Almathea」that boasted its high defensive ability.

"——Let us begin. Master, give me your orders!"

The divine mountain goat appeared with lighting in tow. She also finished her preparations for the fight.

Asuka gripped her reins and jumped on her back. Although she was at an overwhelming disadvantage in terms of physical abilities, she could fight well enough thanks to the Gift of the impenetrable fortress and speed.

Taking out the「Flute of Hamelin」, Asuka gave out the commands for the three Melun sisters.

"Let's go, Merun! Merul, Meril!"

Roger! – vigorous replies came from the Mel sisters that hid in the cave.

At that moment, Faceless’ foothold became muddy.

"Foothold..."

"Flyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy——!!!"

The flute’s sound reverberated, resulting to a dramatic effect..

The magic orbs that Asuka threw, turned into sharp blades of air and attacked Faceless from every direction. They turned to a hundred, or even a thousand super-thin, barely visible attacks and assaulted her.

A dance of a thousand blades, of which even one of them could kill a Titan.

Faceless switched her serpent sword to twin-spears and faced the attacks.

"Fuu—!"

She fixed her breathing. She united her blood circulation and physical strength in order to accelerate her heartbeat. And with the softness that was at the pinnacle of practice and training, she fended off the first attack with the twin-spears she took out.

2, 4, 8, 16 and then 360 attacks rushed at her at the same time. This was the divine tempest that produces the “storm and stress” from vengeance.

However, Asuka believed that she would be able to handle this.

Since she even fended off the wicked claws of the Three Headed Dragon with her divine techniques that even surprised the Great Sage Who Devastates the Seas, this level of tempest was but a breeze to her. It won't be good unless she exceeds that.

Asuka quickly prepared for the second attack.

But Faceless didn't allow that.

While it's true that this tempest was like a divine wind, it wasn't like it didn't have gaps that no needle could pass. What's more, she fortunately had two spears. In other words, even if she loses one, the second will definitely defend her.

Faceless did not let slip the opportunity that appear just for an instant.

Reverse-gripping the spear, she faced towards Asuka and threw her spear overhead.

『The ceiling is collapsing! Master, please hold on!』

"I-I got it!"

Alma informed Asuka with a flustered voice. Asuka, in response, grasped the reins tightly.While evading the collapsing ceiling and falling stalactites, she grew distant from Faceless.

Asuka and Faceless lost sight of each other thanks to the collapsed ceiling.

"I lost her.....! Let's chase after her, quickly!"

『Please wait. The Pseudo-Divinity is about to wear off. Let's take distance and prepare for now.』

Almathea informed her with a calm voice. Asuka turned around, smacking her tongue that was unusual to her.

The Pseudo-Divinity given by nature, would reach the time limit soon. Faceless tried to gauge that time limit and destroyed the cave. She expected that if there was no time limit, Asuka then would immediately chase after her.

『She's not just skillful, she also managed to find our weakness in just little time… her Game managing abilities are also high. Master's sister received wonderful training.』

"Kuh..... I know that!"

Faceless' abilities were of divine levels, Asuka already knew about this. Once before, she already understood the gap in their abilities. You could even say that she was envious of her.

But, in this battle, Asuka already understood. The one who needs to get stronger in order to overcome the fierce battle was not just Yō. She herself also needs to get stronger to overcome this death struggle.

"That said..... If we discover her first, we will get an overwhelming advantage. Lets search for a detour."

She recovered the Melun sisters and collected「Adamantine」from the collapsed cave as well. The fight has only just begun. Let's move without negligence – saying it to herself Asuka walked away.

Part 2

At that time.

Kasukabe Yō was silently gathering ores from the cave with her giant hands.

In this Game, the one who collects the most「Adamantine」will win.

In truth, that would be impossible because unlike the preliminary round,stealing others' Gift Cards was the most effective method in this game.

Snatching the opponent's points to add them to your own.

That was the most effective method, but if the usual Izayoi was provoked to that point, then he would surely do some searching for Yō.

So, waiting like this and gathering the ores was also an effective move. Fighting with Izayoi was important but so was overall victory.

(It's not a Gift Game that you can win by just fighting. So, it's important to be prepared for any situation! Izayoi doesn't have any Gift for collecting so his points must be low!)

Yō desperately kept digging.

The duration of the main battle was one hour. Even if he gathers「Adamantine」in the first half and goes to fight after that, the remaining time would probably not be enough. What's more, Yō already made a foolproof plan.

For now, she should just dig and dig.

Kasukabe Yō silently stored the piled up ores in her Gift Card.

However, it was also true that this was not such an easy Gift Game that could be won by just steady means. In the worst case, she might have to hide her Gift Card.

At that moment, large trembling ran through the cave.

"""RA..... RA... GE-GEEEYAAAAAaaa!!!"""

"!?"

Yō's hands stopped working without thinking from the sudden cry. It was something she had never heard before. However, the cries she heard was not just one. Only six people advanced to the final round. It was impossible for such ferocious sounds to have been heard at this stage.

It was possible that the Mythical Beasts living in this cave might have barged in.

Just as Yō decided to go confirm the identity behind the cries...the whole cave started beating as if it had come alive.

(Just like Aži Dakāha, the cave became a living thing.....!? But who!?)

It wasn't an ordinary person. This must be the power of the Gift of bestowment called「Authority」. But she hasn't heard of any participant having a gift like that.

It would be troublesome if there was a strong person who uses Authority participating in the finals. If she doesn't strike first, they might get in the way later. For the time being, Yō stored the ores inside her Gift Card, and went towards the center.

She then saw an unexpected person there.

"Enclose, Algol! Don't let him go!"

"GEEEEYAAAAaaaa!!!"

The pulsating cave grew fangs and claws and attacked Sakamaki Izayoi. Although Izayoi had a carefree smile on his face, he was unable to counterattack so he was not sure what to do.

"Tch.....! Changing「Adamantine」to devils is troublesome as expected, Luilui!"

It was entirely different from the time back at the white wall palace.

They weren't by no means especially fast, but if whole ground that was full of「Adamantine」was transformed into the serpent and scorpion demonic beasts, then even Izayoi wouldn't be able to easily handle them.

Sharp fangs attacked Izayoi from overhead. The blow that could shake the stars could easily crush the unprocessed「Adamantine」, but it won't go like the previous fight.

Izayoi showed a ferocious smile as if he just finished warming up and bared his fangs.

"HA.....! I thought Algol vanished along with the disappearance of Perseus constellation! What's going on Luilui!"

"From the evaluation of merits earned in battle with Aži Dakāha, one third of it came back! Although I can't summon her, I can still use the authority! I will clear away the loss of that time here! Also, don't call me Luilui!!!"

Luilui was waiting for the opening while freely soaring in the air equipped with the flying boots.

But he wasn't the only one fighting against Izayoi.

Walking in skies, the Gryphon, clad in the storms, assaulted Izayoi. As he avoided the fangs of devils, he took that attack head on.

"Tch.....! Gry, you bastard!"

"GEEEEYAAAAaaaa!!!"

The Gryphon rushed while raising a ferocious roar. The power behind that rush was unlike before. Noticing the new pair of wings on his back, Yō let out a voice of admiration.

"Gry! Why do you have those wings!"

『Oh! Yō! You came at the right time! Lend me a hand to reform this big fool!』

Eeeh? Eh? – Kasukabe shook her head left and right not understanding what was going on.

Crashing on the wall, Izayoi wiped his lips and stared at Gry as if not understanding him.

"What's wrong, are you still angry? Isn't it fine? You received the Divine wings from Indra after all. What are you dissatisfied at?"

『Who requested that of you!!! For me, that wound was not a disgrace but an honour! Remembering that they were offered for your life and victory in "Underwood", they only gave precious feelings! —Why did you heal them without the assent of the person in question!』

"Didn't I say that it was a heavy burden for me! It's not my hobby to carry the debt of life! What's more, I also said that『I would return the debt someday』when you got injured, didn't I!?"

『But no one asked you to return it!!!』

"Shut up, you black usurer!!!"

Both of them were unusually emotional.

Laius was not able to comprehend their talk, but he understood that they were yelling about something serious. He decided to wait until they settle it and folded his arms.

Temporarily stopping the attacks, he turned towards Yō.

"Kasukabe Yō... was it? You also came for taking the championship?"

"I-I? I came to accomplish what I declared befo—"

『Alright, I got it! I think we have to beat everything out of you! Are you prepared? Izayoi!!!』

"Come here, Gryphon!!! I'll take you up to your game and make yakitori out of you, so prepare yourself!"

Barking at each other, Izayoi and Gry got heated up.

As expected, even Yō got flustered. She won't maintain her status if it continued like this.

"W-Wait a minute! Even though I made a declaration before, why is everyone meddling!? Wait your turn!"

"......Aah?

Laius let out a puzzled voice.

At that point, Izayoi finally noticed Yō.

"Kasukabe...? ...Just about time. I want to have a talk with you."

"O-Okay."

Yō straightened from the tensed atmosphere. She did such a bold mic performance after all. Talking in mind Izayoi's character, it wouldn't be unexpected if he attacks suddenly.

The spectators who watched the match through "Little Demons of Laplace" also watched as they gulped the saliva from tension. Lily, Ayesha, and shop manager were also among them.

Kuro Usagi tightly held the mic and observed the situation while preparing herself.

(Izayoi-san.....!)

The tensed atmosphere drifted in the audience seats and at the stage.

But Izayoi's expression changed and calmed down.

Looking Yō directly in eyes, Izayoi showed a slight smile and got down to business.

"Kasukabe"

"W-What?"

From the calm voice, she slightly relaxed. But that relief was crushed in the next moment.

"I leave the「No Name」to you. —— I will leave the community for a bit and leave for journey."

"....."

.....? (Audience)

.....!? (Commentators)

.....!!?? (Aristocrat of Little Garden)

『Oh. What does that mean?』

"It's about the recommendation of Kasukabe as the leader. It looks like most of the things are settled. Everything will work out if Kasukabe takes over. And I will go to earn some experience."

"Isn't that great? It would be great for everyone if you grow up a bit."

Gry raised his voice of admiration as Laius announced without much interest.

At that point, Yō finally understood that something was not right with three of them.

『Yō as the leader? Fufu, I'm also proud as a friend. You will surely become a leader and surpass your predecessors.』

"I think that she is the most normal from the three so I welcome it. This guy and that red one are too ferocious."

"Oi oi, you say that because you don't know the true character of Kasukabe! She is sufficient with this — What's wrong Kasukabe?"

Izayoi looked at Yō with suspicion.

She was shivering while hanging her head in shame. Her face along with ears was dyed with red that reached all the way down to her neck. But that was only natural.

Coming this far, Yō finally understood the situation.

".....You three. At the moment when I was giving speech, what were you doing?"

"Speech?"

『What are you talking about? There were no screens in the waiting rooms』

"I was meeting with Tokuteru. .....Did something happen perhaps?"

Ah.

So that's it, that's what's going on? That's what happened?

As one would expect from the Aristocrat of Little Garden (LOL) and Strongest War God (LOL).

They were both acting with good intentions, but ended up doing something that was not needed.

Thanks to them, this was the biggest embarrassment in life for her. The audience was also dumbfounded without a doubt. Ayesha would surely burst out laughing after this.

This first speech after the assumption of the Leader was the true torture.....!!!

"—KU-RO-U-SA-GI"

"Y-Yess!!!"

—I will get you for this this bitterness.

Kasukabe Yō muttered full of resentment.

Kuro Usagi as a judge understood everything that was happening in the Game. And from the amount of anger that was put in that low whisper, her body instinctively trembled.

Seems like the time of reliability has ended. It sure is regretful.

".....Kasukabe? What's wrong?"

"Nothing!!! Nothing at all! I was wrong to have worried about you, Izayoi! —Hmph! if you are going for a journey, than do as you like. I've been stronger than Izayoi for a while now. People like Izayoi are unnecessary to「No Name」!"

Kasukabe Yō talked full of emotions.

He didn't know why she was talking so desperately, but Izayoi was not so obedient to that

point.

"What was that? Certainly, I wasn't thinking that I could win easily, but I didn't think that I'd lose either."

"Hmph! I heard from Azuka. That you thought I was already stronger than you."

"Oioioioioi, isn't it uncool to to take pride in modest words of the slightly nervous boy! When you sulk, you become even cuter!"

They continued to keep on talking and trying to get back at each other.

Laius and Gry looked at them with surprise, but they entered the preparations to battle soon after.

"Not that I care, but isn't it time to start it about now? Our time is limited."

『Umu. In other words, this will become battle royal of sorts, right?』

"That's right. Lets beat down Izayoi together. I also feel like kicking his face flying right about now."

"Ah! Bring it on! As one would expect, I got pissed from your accusations! All three of you come at me at once—!!!"

The three of them clashed along with the war cries.

「Adamantine Forge」approached the moment of battle.

Chapter 9

Part 1

—Looking back in time, before the Game start.

Izayoi called Mikado Tokuteru over in a place some distance away from the resting room and actual stage.

Mikado Tokuteru stared at Izayoi with eyes saying “What do you want before the start of the Game”.

“Oi oi, what is it Izayoi? Calling me to this desolate place.”

“...Nothing important. Just that I want another reward, so I want to rip off a little from you.”

Against Mikado Tokuteru’s sarcasm, Izayoi gave a mysterious glance.

That was as if a predator was hesitating whether to jump on the prey right in front of him. Sensing that uneasiness in the atmosphere, Mikado Tokuteru released a fragment of his spirit level for prevention.

So that’s it, this was the reward he really wanted.

It was indeed a reward that could not be spoken before others. Not only was Mikado Tokuteru,

the sponsor of「Spirit Train」, he was also the disguise of「Indra」that was famous throughout heaven and earth. Dangerous words such as「Fight me」obviously could not be mentioned.

The question was how far could Mikado Tokuteru fight with his current spirit level…

“Don’t misunderstand. I did not come to you for a fight. Just wanted to ask you something.”

“That’s all?”

Mikado Tokuteru showed a disappointed look.

Indra was a useless god that was also renowned as a problem child. So he saw Izayoi and others as his junior completely, and just wanted to spar against them.

“Mah, nevermind. Then what do you want to ask?”

“Oh. Then I will be direct… Indra(You) ranked what in Little Garden?”

Hearing Izayoi’s straightforward question, even Mikado Tokuteru could only laugh bitterly. True, this was not something that could be asked upright. Although he was the King of Gods

that stood above countless Divine Beings, that was not the case in this Little Garden that was piled up by countless multiverses like particles.

Regardless of answering “above who” or “below who” would result in arguments.

Hence he changed the subject.

“Ultimately speaking, people in Three Digits had equal spirit level. 「Queen」 was the only rule breaker. The Two Digits above this – reaching 「Full Authority Territory」 – can’t even enter the battle stage.”

“...Can’t even enter?”

“Ah ah. Shiroyoruō[1] is a classic example. If she could not control the total mass of the origin of universe, she could not reach geocentrism. That person reached 「Full Authority Territory」 with just two authorities.”

「Full Authority Territory」 — Not a metaphor, that was peak of territory that could only be reached when one received all authorities within one’s body. Likewise, 「Omnipotent Territory」 referred to the territory that received all abilities, but it did not mean omnipotent literally. Hence in a battle they must grant a portion of the omnipotence as Gift to others, let them fight on their behalf.

“According to this interpretation, One Digit can be said to be an incomplete spirit status with partial abilities. 「End Emptiness」 is the best example. It is a spirit body that granted 「Authority to end all worlds (tales)」 to all Omnipotent and Full Authority beings.”

“...That’s just, it isn’t an opponent in the dimension of winning or losing.”

“Of course. Think about what kind of place Little Garden is. You won’t see the limit when looking up. No matter how hardworking you are, strong opponents will appear one by one.However because of this! I cannot stop wanting more of Little Garden!”

He stood akimbo, announced with a tone that showed no concern for others.

Hearing that, Izayoi went silent for a moment, then quietly spoke.

“Then — I would like to ask Indra. The Sakamaki Izayoi of now, exactly what rank am I?”

Hearing him ask the real question after much trouble, Mikado Tokuteru doubted his ears, widened his eyes.

He thought what he was going to ask with such a strange expression, to think that it was a question that was so not his style. Even a concern he worried for the first time should have a limit.

On the other hand, Izayoi himself was very serious, he had also worried about whether to ask or not for a long time.

Mikado Tokuteru smiled lightly, and spoke with a grin.

“Alright alright, I know. Then let this Mikado Tokuteru evaluate you... Umu, it isn’t wrong to say your power, wisdom, bravery can reach Four Digit. However you are a bit lacking in technique. If not counting「Another Cosmology」, you probably can’t win against Saurian Demon King. Let alone the strongest species.”

“Then what must I do to be as strong as a Three Digit… No, there is no point in hiding up to this point. I will ask you directly, what must I do to become strong enough to defeat Aži Dakāha alone?”

Hearing such a question that threw away his shame and fame, this time Mikado Tokuteru giggled on reflex.

“That kind of thing, go find yourself. If you can’t find it here, then go out on a journey to look for it.「No Name」is not so weak that they cannot survive without you alone. If you are worried just find out yourself using this chance.”

Mikado Tokuteru back faced Izayoi. It probably meant that he would not answer his questions anymore.

“Mah, shameless victory, would probably be accompanied by the agony that caused even that Arjuna to shed tears. It would not be overcome easily. Even more if the opponent is someone you came to mutual understanding after a death struggle...Really. Carrying Justice (that one) and Evil (this one), it is probably very heavy.”

“Uu…”

That last sentence, was a farewell speech towards Demon Lord Aži Dakāha. This major God that contained both the good and evil side, could understand that Demon Lord better than anyone.

“I say, Izayoi. I know I am a useless god… but your agony, I can properly understand it. Hence I don’t want you to rot away like this. Because no matter what, your legends, have not even started.”

Finishing his words, Mikado Tokuteru returned to the Live interpreter seat while holding back his laughter. The remaining would be left for Izayoi to decide for himself.

To become the gear of history and save the world?

Or to throw himself in other battles?

Regardless of choosing which side… It would definitely be joyous.

Part 2

Serpens Scorpius Sword flashed past her neck.

That masterful hit, caused people to imagine that just by a skin thick difference, the artery in the neck would be severed. Asuka fought back against the death scythe closing in on her many times on one end, while increasing the jewels for Alma on the other end.

Although it was squandering, there was a limit to the number.

This was the biggest weakness along with the time limit.

The disadvantage would grow if she entered a battle of attrition. Asuka was slowly forced into a corner, but she also began to understand the power relationship between the two of them.

(Although battle of attrition is disadvantageous, thinking it another way she only has this method! Considering Alma that has impregnable defense, our side is still in advantage…!)

No matter how masterful Faceless' swordsmanship was, it was a poor compatibility against Almathea's auto defense castle.

The Gifts that could break her who became the Aegis shield was indeed very few. If it could be broken, then it was definitely physical destructive power, but some special Gift.

(Victory chance will surely arrive! We can win as long as we maintain the right pace!)

She confirmed the effect while holding the reins tightly.

The presence closing in from the back stopped in her track, it was just this moment.

"...As expected of Almathea. The foster-mother of Zeus is unlike normal. Just my swordsmanship alone cannot break your defense."

She spoke as such after stopping. Asuka saw it as a victory chance. Despite the other side might have some tactic, Alma's charging and impregnable defense was above her.

Now was the time to decide a victor. Asuka granted another three mock divinity to raise Alma's spirit rank. Although the amount was not sufficient to raise her spirit rank to the limit, this would reinforce her defense further.

Almathea let out a cry, she also understood now was the key moment.

"So I really don't have a choice but to use it, huh… My, our authority's root."

Faceless returned her sword back into the Gift Card for some reason. Even if that sword could not break Alma, what would bare fist amount to?

—An ominous premonition, caused her hairs to raise. She did not doubt that this was the victory chance. But if she couldn't shake off the feeling that if she charged in now, it would result in a fatal defeat.

“Never mind, don’t hesitate! Charge in at full power!”

“Understood, Master!”

The lightning discharge made the stalactite cave seem to collapse at any moment. Even if this attack could not decide a victor, she could also look for a chance again.

Turning her back on the chance of victory, was not something Asuka would do.

Even if that was...exactly what Faceless expected.

“We are going, Alma. Using this attack, finish everything—!!!”

The Capricorn celestial beast that transformed into lightning replied with a roar. The atmosphere bloated, lightning resounded everywhere. The strongest shield in Greek Mythology now transformed into the strongest spear, charging towards the enemy with her sharp horn.

Once this rapid thunder rampaged, everything would definitely return to dust. The enemy that was exterminated with this attack from the celestial beast would probably not even retain a single atom.

Serpens Scorpius Sword’s sword flash could not resist. Unable to resist at all. At the moment of contact, everything in the material world would be destroyed.

(A blow on par with thunder. She could not dodge no matter what.)

Impossible to block.

Also impossible to divert.

Then what should be done – this kind of thing, thinking was not even needed.

“Aegis is impossible to destroy. That kind of thinking is the reason for your loss, Asuka.”

Sadness tinged in her line of sight. At the same time, she took out a bronze sword from the Gift Card. The instant she detected what that object was, Alma cried in despair.

“Uu, not good!!!”

The charge that was originally aimed at the abdomen, twisted away as if to avoid that bronze sword. She originally wanted to cut Alma into half from the middle, only managed to scratch the abdomen of the strongest shield. Both sides of opposition, due to the sure win attack being ineffective clicked their tongues. Faceless also planned to use that move as the decisive victory.

Asuka did not know what happened at all, only slapped her back hard to endure that slightly nauseous feeling.

“So painful… What... What happened…!?”

“Escape immediately, Master! That...That divine sword, is my nemesis!”

Alma that transformed into human madly yelled. Despite not knowing why she changed into human, the true danger was not this point.

Inside Alma’s body, all spirit status had been lost now.

“Now that my spirit status has been routed, even I cannot protect you! Please look for comrades to help! Facing against that divine sword — 「Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi」, even I cannot fight against it!”

Alma had resolved to die, and stood before Faceless.

Hearing the divine sword’s name from her mouth, Asuka could not hide her astonishment. Because the name of that divine sword, as long as one was born in Japan, nobody would not know.

“「Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi」...!? Liar. Why would she have the three Imperial Regalia[2]!? That should be existing in my era as a memorial.”

Towards Asuka’s natural dout, Faceless replied coldly.

“...Such poor comprehension ability, Asuka. 「Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi」 went on stage many times in history, and also gone missing many times in history[3]. This one is lost during the Heian Period. Originally it is a divine sword that only exists, but if a royalty that possesses Japanese God Pantheon’s divinity holds his sword, it will display its original power! ...Playing the role of nullifying all surrounding supernatural, Gift and magic, a tuning divine sword!”

That authority, caused Asuka to feel as if electric current was running across her whole body.

Nullifying the effects of Gift, that could still be understood. That was not a rare Gift. In some 「Another Cosmology」, it was an additional ability added as a side effect.

The problem was the other ability – causing the supernatural ability or spirit rank that was obtained through Gift to be unusable, that was the power in another dimension. What must she do to fight against that?

“Master, get a hold of yourself! Although that is truly a strong divine sword, the corresponding risk must also exist! Please retreat for now, and recollect yourself!”

Alma’s words made her recover her cool. That was true. Since it was a divine sword possessing such power, then she could have killed Asuka anytime.

Therefore there must exist a reason she did not do so.

“So-orry! Buy me some time, Alma!”

Despite being reluctant, there was no other way.

Asuka fled carrying Mel and Melulu. Faceless did not immediately chase after them, but put up her stance and pointed at Alma before her.

And she had also made the first mistake. Alma had already seen through the risk she carried from that series of actions.

Alma held her cut abdomen and stood upright, cold sweat broke out but she showed a fearless smile.

“...Not chasing? The you now should be able to go after my master and ignore me completely.”

“Such harsh words, the Goddess of Capricorn. This divine sword holds the authority to severe all unnatural in the surroundings. Even me as the user is no exception...”

Yes... Which meant that Faceless as the possessor also had her spirit rank weakened, physical ability reduced to a normal girl. Normally this would make the chance of winning fifty-fifty. But as Queen’s knight, even if she lost her spirit rank, she still had her superb swordsmanship.

In order to defeat her under such condition, only someone superior than her in techniques could suppress her.

(Firstly Master would be impossible. So it had to be me huh…!)

Although it couldn’t be called master of all martial arts, Alma had also cultivated very strong martial arts. She should be able to handle a normal martial artist easily.

But this girl was different. She was not an ordinary person, but an one against a thousand expert. Amongst the Celtic Mythology that had many knights, she was able to obtain the ninth seat. Hence it would be impossible not to know what kind of achievement that was. It had to be sword art that stepped into god realm.

(If she was originally from the Japanese God Pantheon, her martial art would definitely be within the top five…! Can the me now stand up against that…!?)

Alma held her wounded abdomen and readied her stance.

Faceless also brought「Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi」before her eyes. The sense of stability of being one with the sword from her back to her limbs, caused Alma to feel dazed unwillingly. This girl, how much time did she spend in order to cultivate such level of swordsmanship?

(Her teacher was either Dagda or Scathach. Lugh should have changed it’s form to spear…

Guh, it was such a pity regardless of who! If they wanted to compare their disciples, I hope to wait for another year![4])

Letting the similar attainment but opposite talent twin to display a human-god competition. Although this was a good thing, Asuka was still a rough gem that just started her polishing. She signed the master-servant contract against her will for the sake of honing Asuka to her preference.

"Uu, even though this is a common duel, the disadvantageous condition is too severe. Not only was the cultivation time short, the opponent also took out the divine sword from「Full Authority Territory」(Little Garden Two Digits), Master's chance of victory is too slim…!!! Is there no grounds for a future duel!?"

Alma who understood the hopeless situation, suggested cease fire while buying time. Since she made all Gifts unusable, it was already one step into the「Full Authority Territory」.

And if that kind of words could stop it, this Game would not have existed in the first place.

Faceless entered the one-foot-one-sword[5] distance, tilted her blade in a stance to slash from the shoulder diagonally down, executed the slash with minimal movement.

Despite the slash moving only a few millimeter, against a bare-handed opponent it was the most effective. In response to this hard to dodge or block hit, Alma drew backwards.

Alma with her injured abdomen could not achieve body balance. Dodging horizontally would cause her center of gravity to collapse, then the second slash would truly split her into two.

But Faceless stopped her sword tip as if predicted this. The blade that stopped just before her nose shifted down to to her chest, and stabbed towards her left chest.

(Uu, it's stabbing in! Now is the only chance to gamble!)

In sword art, stabbing belonged to dual bladed sword. The property of stabbing would easily leave the body in a defenseless condition.

And the sword she held was not a rapier or Japanese katana with a thin blade, but a rough bronze blade like the western sword. It was easy to capture with sight.

Although Alma whose right abdomen was injured reacted slower by one step, it was not undodgeable. As long as she captured the wrist that extended towards her along with the stab and then pin her down, it would be Alma's victory.

However Faceless' superior martial arts did not let go of her anxiety.

The injured Alma's objective was short term duel, this was within expectation. She understood clearly that if she showed an opening the opponent would definitely take the bait, hence she used a poor move such as stabbing with a bronze sword.

Facing Alma that attempted to grab her wrist, Faceless responded with her steel boot kicking the injured abdomen.

“Gah…!!!”

In an instant, intense pain robbed her thoughts. If her spirit rank was retained it might be possible, but since her body was only a human now, this blank in thoughts was unavoidable.

Aiming the left chest was to make her dodge to her right. She believed that if she was kicked in the injured abdomen while her center of gravity was shifted to the right, pain would rob her of her conscious. Instead of saying it as foolproof, it was a game control like the final showdown in chess, for defeating Alma.

“Checkmate. If you don’t interfere, I can leave you alone like this…”

“Don’t joke…!!!”

“I thought so as well. Then I will do this.”

Fuu. Alma’s tendons in both legs were severed, the intense pain made her body convulse, but not taking her life was unexpected.

“Why…!?”

“You are the witness. Regardless who is the winner, nobody knowing the whole story is too hollow. Especially if I won, both the winner and loser would leave Little Garden.”

Finishing her words, she kept「Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi」back into her Gift Card.

“People that was cut by「Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi」, even if the sword aura disappeared, spirit rank would be sealed for several days. You would not be able to stand up for the time being, but it will be healed after some time. Please do not move now.”

With that it would be one against one. It was needless to use「Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi」anymore. Next would be the battle with her martial arts and Gifts.

Faceless equipped her whip sword, and pursued Asuka.

Alma laid on the ground as the loser, reluctantly watched her shrinking back.

Part 3

Kasukabe Yō, Laius and Gry's teamwork only lasted a short while. After all, including Izayoi, once they each used their strong power, making a rampage freely, so it was a matter of course. After the teamwork collapsed, they each fought for themselves.

But among them, only Laius' figure couldn't be seen.

(That Bastard! The Gift Hermit is damn troublesome!)

Izayoi ripped apart the「Adamantine」serpents while looking for his whereabouts. The helmet of hermit that received the Gift of Hades had the worst compatibility with Izayoi. Aside from the voice for commands, there was no other signs of presence.

As a result, Izayoi was forced to run around all the time to avoid receiving surprise attacks. Of course, running around for about an hour wouldn't deplete his stamina, but like this, points of Laius would be maintained. What's more, for some reason, Laius completely ignored the other two and only aimed at Izayoi.

(Now, what do do.....! It's about time to make a decision.....!)

Should he aim at the other two and ignore Laius? Or should he start with the enemy who has the worst compatibility? But to Izayoi, something like that was not even worth thinking about. Floating a ferocious smile, he clinged at the corner of the cave and called out to invisible Laius.

"Luilui, Let's end the match already! Come out and show yourself!"

It was a cheap provocation, so he was aware that it would fail.

What Izayoi aimed at were the three attacks. And according to his plan, the bedrock around him started to demonify and pulsate.

(He felt for it.....!)

Izayoi's hand and legs got restrained that looked as if he was taken by a surprise. Because he guessed that if he leaned on the cave with his back, then Laius would surely demonify that section of it.

And Laius would decide to deliver the final blow himself.

"Keep restraining him like that, Algol! I will finish it myself!"

Although the voice seemed to come from the far away, the owner was probably in some 10 meters away. As soon as Izayoi noticed that he came surprisingly near, he immediately tore off the restrictions on his right foot and at the same time kicked down the ground and destroyed it.

"Is that all you've got!"

Along with the roar, came a tempest of fragments. The kicked up rocks flew everywhere on the opposite side like bullets and whole cave shook.

From that shock, the ceiling of the cave got cracked and stalactites started raining down like spears.

But what Izayoi aimed at was something else.

(Good, the dust cloud rose up! With this, I will know no matter where he comes from!)

Back at the White Wall Palace, Kasukabe Yō was able to detect the helmet of hermit with sound waves.

This is the imitation of it. If possible, he didn't want to use the same strategies as other people, but he had no luxury to afford that. This Gift is the most threatful among the ones that「Perseus」holds.

If he couldn't bring him down with blow, there would be no second chance.

Izayoi put strength to his fist.

Currently, all parts except one leg were restricted with demonified bedrock, but something like that could be released whenever he wanted. That's why he thought he might be able to bait him out if he continued to be restricted to the last moment.

He strained his eyes in order to not miss even the tiniest motion of the dust cloud.

The moment the dust cloud at the right direction jolted a bit, Izayoi widened his eyes.

"—So that's where you are!"

He threw a punch towards the bedrock that was restraining his right hand. His fist tore off the cloud of dust and accurately smashed the helmet of hermit.

But, immediately following that, Izayoi's eyes were dyed with wonder.

(—!!? Laius is not here!? Just the helmet and boots!?)

At that moment, he notice that he was the one who got baited. Laius made a decoy out of the helmet of hermit and flying boots and let them receive Izayoi's strongest blow.

Laius didn't miss this opportunity that appeared only for an instant.

"You are the one who got baited— Sakamaki Izayoi!!!"

Laius fell down from above aiming at Izayoi's back. Izayoi still had his fist pushed out and his stance was broken, so he was not aware about Laius' location.

With this, it was clearly understood which one ended up in the dark. The Gift of Leo wasn't very helpful with the star spirit killer spears. What's more Laius was coming from above and Izayoi stood below.

From his stance, attacking was impossible. But the boiling point of Izayoi who has been had, wasn't low to that point.

"Above huh!!! In that case I'll break down every part around together—!!!"

He brandished his fist, and thrust it towards the ground.

In an instant, the shock that would be mistaken for an earthquake spread through the entire mine district. The moment bedrock received a serious blow of Izayoi, it collapsed to dust with a force that it seemed like it would pierce the earth crust itself. Mountain and each part of the slanted mine started to collapse, and rock started to fall even to the audience seats.

"I-It's dangerous!"

Kuro Usagi took out「Vajra Replica」and started destroying the falling rocks. But she alone was not enough.

Among the screams raised in the audience from the falling rocks came a voice of encouragement.

"This is bad! Let's go Mandra!"

"Big sister should go to the right! I'll head to the left!"

"S-Sara-sama? Even Mandra-sama!"

Kuro Usagi's usamimi jumped up from surprise. Sara and Mandra got on the stage and started breaking rocks.

Kuro Usagi heard that she managed to recover the Dragon Horn, but shouldn't she and Coppélia supposed to be resting?

"Sorry, we had a reason to come here. That's why we moved in cover. In truth, It's about Sandra—”

".....Sister. It would be better to discuss about that matter later. Right now, protecting the audience takes priority."

"YES! With you two around, it would be a great help! Problem is the matter of town....."

"That won't be a problem. Every member of「No Name」should have come yesterday. There should be no problem if they are there"

After the words of Sara, Kuro Usagi clasped both hands together and showed her gratitude.

At that time, Shirayuki-hime, Leticia, and Croix lending their support at the reservoir of mines.

Shirayuki-hime who was holding the water from reservoir back from flooding the town, asked a question in irritation.

"Heey, doesn't head know the limit!"

"Really. We are somehow managing this because of Shirayuki-dono, but as one would

expect, I want him to reflect on it. One mistake and it would have been a disaster."

"Kihahaha! Well, half of it is thanks to my teleportation!"

Silhouette of Croix displayed an amusing smile.

But, even though they were complaining, they all understood that Izayoi was the one at fault. But at the same time, they were glad that he decided to take this game seriously enough that he was even fighting seriously.

"......It's good that he's having fun. After all, I want our masters to have fun in Little Garden."

"Hmph, compared for Asuka and Yō, master is doing whatever he pleases."

From the remark of Shirayuki-hime, Leticia made a wry smile. But, both of them understood.

That this battle...Would decide the future paths of these three problem children.

Part 4

The result of the match between Izayoi and Laius, was not long before the commotion completely died down.

Izayoi's right shoulder was mercilessly slashed, while Laius was thrown onto the bedrock.

But the one standing was Izayoi. Laius's attack was weakened by Izayoi creating a shockwave by hitting the ground, hence not reaching the fatal level.

He did not even release a second strike before falling on the ground.

Laius lied down helplessly, grudgingly bit his teeth.

"Damn… Damn, damn it, I lost again…!!! Under such good conditions, even sacrificing my own body to attack, making sure everything went smoothly… Still, I couldn't win huh…!!!"

Dong, he struck the ground, Laius probably steeled his determination to face this battle. Or else he would not challenge his strongest enemy.

Izayoi stared at his appearance while panting.

Just like he said, regardless of what condition, the scale was tilting in favor of Laius.

The reason Izayoi was not defeated, was simply because his fundamental ability was above Laius. Only that alone determined the victor.

—But, was that the only reason?

“.....”

Izayoi leaned on the wall, nothing came out of his mouth.

He was never cornered to this degree by someone much weaker than him.

No matter how weak his opponent was he would use his full strength, that was Izayoi’s style. Then wasn’t he supposed to be fully prepared for any opponent before taking them on, then crush his opponents upon that foundation?

How about this time? Did Sakamaki Izayoi prepare any tactics against Laius and Gry, and Kasukabe Yō? Did he not become over confident due to him knowing everything about his opponents?

(...Damn. The one that lost face is me.)

The victor that did not use up his tactics, what kind of words could he say to the loser that used up everything he had.

Both sides only had tragic.

Izayoi was planning to leave just like that, but Laius spoke up unexpectedly.

“Remember this… Next… next time, I will be the winner. I will make you return the fame of 「Perseus」 one day…!!!”

“——”

Sensing the boiling fighting spirit from his back, Izayoi merely turned his head back.

There was no longer an empty-headed young master before his eyes.

The warrior that focused on his goal, stared at Izayoi with thousands of emotions.

“...Aah. Alright, come at me if you want. I will face you anytime, Constellation Knight.”

Words flowed out naturally. A smile that could not be hidden also hung on the corner of his mouth.

That was like a true smile after a long time. And also, as if he found something important back. That premonition of certainty filled his chest.

Izayoi advanced on the devastated ground in the stalactite cave, smiled after seeing the final opponent standing before him.

“...The last one remaining is you after all, Kasukabe.”

“In the end it was Gry who let me. Izayoi seemed to have a hard fight, there is only five minutes left.”

Such a long time had past, Izayoi mumbled. He did not feel much time had past, but it was true that he fought against Laius for almost half an hour.

“I made you wait for the finale. Do you want to fight another time?”

“How come? This remaining time is advantageous to me. Don’t try to run away.”

Kasukabe Yō replied with a fervent voice never heard before.

Izayoi also understood her meaning and smiled bitterly.

Seriously, one after another it was endless.

They were truly the best companions, he was so happy he almost cried.

(That’s right… Just as Ojō-sama said, the me recently is somewhat strange.)

Be it「Spirit Train」, or the flowers in the hot spring, he only argued against what he saw.

Even though it was a joyous matter, he could not enjoy it, but rebut it anxiously instead.

Although it was fortunate he did not create trouble for others for now.

But if this anxiety could not be corrected, there would come one day when the relationship between Sakamaki Izayoi and「No Name」would be broken… Just this point, he truly wanted to avoid it.

“Kasukabe.”

“...What?”

“I want to temporarily leave「No Name」. I plan to go on a journey in this Little Garden… To the current me, this is inevitable.”

Umu, Yō accepted his thoughts with a natural nod, then grinned.

“It’s alright. Go where you want to go. During the time Asuka and Izayoi left, I will protect「No Name」.”

“...Sorry. You actually wanted to look for you dad right?”

Hearing Izayoi’s clumsy apology, Yō could not retain her laughter any longer.

“That’s fine. No need to worry. Father will definitely return. Because our real home is this「No Name」after all.”

That cheerful laughter, made Izayoi realize he was worrying for nothing.

Be it Kasukabe Yō or Kudō Asuka, they really became strong. They already reached the level to of Izayoi’s shoulder… No, around his feet. Then what remained, as a member of the same

Community, bidding farewell in the form of a sparring fist.

“——I am Sakamaki Izayoi of「No Name」. Have you resolved yourself?”

“——I am Kasukabe Yō of「No Name」... Umu, I will also do my best.”

Raising「Genon Tree」, displaying the strongest species she chose.

Yō who was covered by golden feather flare fought against Izayoi starting with「Garuda」.

The two facing off against each other laughed together. There was no need for words.

The two warriors possessing power to shake the earth, raised the curtain for the final battle.

Part 5

—Faceless, searched for Kudō Asuka’s location with a hazy consciousness.

The risk「Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi」carried was not only one. The longer she used it, the lesser the time she could stay in Little Garden as a phantom knight.

Not deciding the victor in the clash just now was a heavy loss. Alma who protected her master in the final moment could only be described as excellent.

However, that impregnable shield could no longer move. The remaining matter was to defeat Kudō Asuka.

(...Just a little more, it will be my victory. She cannot use the steel doll in this stalactite cave. This is truly a one against one duel.)

Then she would not lose. Victory was on Faceless’ side.

Question was, if the other party just ran away like that. Since the opponent was Faceless who did not have much time, then that was a method to survive. But considering Kudō Asuka’s personality, that was definitely impossible.

She was not someone who would turn her back on a battle. On the other hand, sensing this emotion that was close to reliance, Faceless could not help but smile bitterly.

After a turn in the stalactite cave, she arrived a a long straight path.

—Kudō Asuka, awaited her at the T-cross juncture.

“.....”

Both side maintained silence.

Her opponent was not surprised about her not holding「Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi」. It seemed that the earth fairy had already investigated the situation. Then this straight path should have traps set.

Some Gifts might have been buried along the path.

No, it was definitely trapped. Otherwise she would not choose to determine the winner on a straight path. But the option of taking a detour never existed in her head. Not much time left was one of the reason, but more importantly, since Kudō Asuka did not escape, Kudō Ayato would not escape all the more.

She took out her favorite whip sword from the Gift Card, adjusted her breathing. Using steel bow to snipe from long distance, or using dual spear to face off would probably be better originally. But every time when Faceless faced against a death struggle, she would definitely use her favorite sword to do the final showdown. She was very confident of her martial art.

After adjusting her stance, just when she was about to dash in, Asuka spoke.

“I am Kudō Asuka of「No Name」... And you?”

“...I am Kudō Ayato of「Queen’s Knights」. Let’s have a fair and square showdown.”

This was the last.

Be it the conversation between sisters, the fight against each other, everything would end.

After the final self introduction was over, Faceless dashed forward on the straight path like a bullet.

“Mel, Melulu, Melilu! Destroy the foothold!”

Understood!!! The three sisters replied with a serious tone never heard before. They used their earth fairy power to crack the foothold, make the ground muddy, causing the dashing speed to fall rapidly.

But the opponent had already been caught once. This degree of trickery would not make Faceless retreat.

Asuka took out the Flute of Ratten, swung the flute like a conductor rod, activated all the traps at once.

The flame gemstone hidden behind the rock transformed into heat ray, continuously sniped at Faceless. Taking on the heat ray that was amplified by Asuka’s power to the maximum was impossible. If she took out the dual spear, she would be in dire situation now.

She controlled her whip sword to extend like a whip, let the sword tip to coil around the stalactite stone on the ceiling, escaped the muddy ground with that, and avoided the heat ray. However, extreme cold air assaulted her next.

The temperature in the air dropped significantly, lowering her mobility. As if already guessed her thoughts, wind blades blew out from the gaps of the stalactite cave.

The combination attack of extreme cold wind and blades. Even if whip sword could block them, the extreme cold air would disable one of her arms. Faceless admitted her thinking was too naive, and jumped forward to dodge this combination attack at the same time.

—However, it was really merciless.

The traps up to now all carried fatal destructive force.

But that straight path only left about seven meters. It would only take one more step for her. Although she could not discern if there were any traps remaining, it should be enough to determine the victor.

(Alright — Jump!)

Instilling strength into her tendons, Faceless lept with all her might, entering melee range.

And then the stalactite cave wriggled about like the stomach of a monster, baring fangs at her. The small eudemons that lived in the cave assaulted her from above, but if just level could hinder her, she would not become the Queen's knight.

Faceless cut apart the stalactite that approached her, timing herself perfectly, but at the same time the final trap activated.

(Uu, my ears…!!?)

Kudō Asuka's surrounding was enveloped by the wall of air. Air pressure also drastically changed at the same time. Due to the Gift of air manipulation, her three semicircular canals were disrupted. This would probably be the tactic against melee fight or steel bow.

Even the Queen's knight also fell for it. A normal person would have lost consciousness, but to only lose her balance, must be credited to her daily trainings.

While her balance was disrupted... She saw the final trap hidden at the T-cross juncture, a thought of despair flashed past her mind.

The miniature red steel doll – Deen was readying its punching stance.

(Not good…!!! Adamantine is not limited to gigantifying Gift…!)

Yes. – In the past journeys of 「Great Sage Equalling Heaven」, she had also shrank her Rúyì Jīngū Bàng and kept it inside her ear. This meant that Adamantine did not only have gigantifying Gift, but also shrinking Gift.

If the maximum weight was retained while shrinking it, the force from the fist would be greater than gigantified. Throwing a compressed fist of hundreds of tons at the same speed, let alone death, maybe even the internal organs would spill out.

—Would she fail only after reaching this point?

The instant such failure flashed in her mind, Faceless abandoned her last pride.

“Severe her mystery,「Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi」!”

The divine sword was drawn again from the Gift Card. Deen would collapse under its own weight, the wall of air would also be dispersed. Then just wait until her three semicircular canals recover, it would be my—!!!

—Dozz.

A piercing sound came from her side abdomen.

“...Aih?”

What happened – Faceless did not understand, and then saw Kudō Asuka in her bosom.

That was something that happened at the same time she drew「Ame no Murakumo no Tsurugi」. Losing her sense of balance, Faceless stood up at the same time she drew her sword. While her three semicircular canals and balance were disrupted, she returned to a normal girl.

No matter how strong her martial art was, she could not act normally under those conditions. Let alone... Let alone being stabbed by Kudō Asuka, she never even considered the possibility.

It was truly a surprising hit.

“...Ah.”

“...Uu.”

Both sides understood that this was the end. That moment seemed to last decades.

Asuka’s both hands held the Flute of Ratten that was used to stab shakingly. The person she killed was not a normal enemy. Right now, she killed her own family. —Yes, she killed her family.

Perhaps, they shared the same loneliness, and could heal each other’s loneliness, but the only family in this world, was killed by her own hands.

But as if to console Asuka’s shaking, Faceless hugged her shoulders.

“...It’s my lost, huh.”

“...Umu, it’s my win.”

Different from before, her gentle eyes lost the ferociousness from before. This was the peace her original quiet soul displayed.

“How regretful. With this my dream is destroyed. Even though I was summoned to Little Garden much earlier than you, and continuously trained. Everything is wasted.”

“...Dream?”

Asuka reflexively asked while raising her head, then immediately covered her mouth. She could not even ask. The technique Faceless had accumulated was not something a normal person’s passion could obtain.

It was the swordsmanship that held the resolve to witness a painting of hell.

The dream that was pursued with such passion, what exactly was it?

Faceless clicked her tongue and smiled bitterly.

“Not some grand dream. I just wanted to see my family. The gentle father, gentle mother, and… Ah ah, so it’s like this, that’s why I lost huh.”

“Uu…!”

Kudō Asuka, after understanding the meaning behind Kudō Ayato’s unfinished words, could not help but let go of the Flute of Ratten.

Ding!, With this elegant sound, it brought them back to the past that was impossible.

—Through the flute notes, seeing the dream of the world she had abandoned.

The world outside the cage she longed for since young.

Crossing the walls, crossing the oceans, crossing the border.

Being together with her parents and twin sister that had already been reborn, not being bound by anything, the her that ran around with smiles.

Experiencing the dream of Halloween that she was unable to fulfil in the past with her passed away family.

That was supposed to be the remnants of the world she abandoned.

But Asuka could not stop the tears coming out from her eyes. She held up the hand of Faceless who was disappearing, watching that well-trained, ungirly palm.

“Such an idiot…! How to be a financial group’s ojō-sama with this kind of rough hand…! Since you had the time, learning tailoring or sewing would have been better....!”

“That’s not true. Queen’s knights handle maid or butler works while off duty. So no matter which I am confident to be better than you.”

“I’m not going to lose! During that jail-like female high school period, I also learned to be skilled with my hands!”

—Then, let’s compare who was better.

The two swallowed back that sentence.

There was no time to talk about those hard to conclude matters.

“...Such a pity. If only you were a more irritating girl.”

“Uu, that’s my line, you stupid little sister…!!!”

I don’t agree to being the younger sister, Faceless disappeared before this sentence could not come out. Asuka wiped her streaming tears, seeing away her sister that could not receive her reward until the end.

Be it words that she wanted to convey, or the future she wanted to walk together with, her whole existence now had dispersed to the other side of the shore.

Only — As if it was the imitation of her soul, that silver white Gift Card remained.

The moment Kudō Asuka picked up that Gift Card – The gong that signified the end of Game, echoed throughout the stage.

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1 Shiro-Yoru-Ō = White Night King. This is Shiroyasha.↩

2 The sword Kusanagi no Tsurugi (草薙劍); the mirror Yata no Kagami (八咫鏡); the jewel Yasakani no Magatama (八尺瓊勾玉). Respectively the virtues: valour, wisdom, benevolence. There are secretly kept in shrines, it’s only during the enthronement ceremony than the Emperor and some priests can see them. Wikipedia.↩

3 Yes. It was first lost after the battle of Dan-no-ura (1185) during the Heian period (794-1185). It should have been lost forever. But he was stole later by a monk, who lose it in the sea. And after that it was said to be recovered.↩

4 (The) Dagda is the 2nd most important God of the Tuatha Dé Danann. He's a father-figure, a chieftain, and a druid. He had a staff/club "which can kill with one end and bring to life with the other".
Setanta is the previous name of Cú Chulainn. He's one of the most famous and glourious hero of Irish mythology. He's also regarded as an incarnation of Lugh.
Lugh is the most important God of the Tuatha Dé Danann, and the father of Cú Chulainn. One of his epithets is Lámfada (long arm/hand) possibly related to his spear skills.↩

5 One-foot-one-sword (Issoku ittō-no-maai, or just Itto-ma): Japanese kendo terminology, meaning the distance that can strike in 1 step forward and guard in 1 step backward). It’s one of the 3 maai (interval).↩

Epilogue

Talking about the game’s result.

It was decided that Kudō Asuka, who collected two Gift Cards, to become the winner.

The fight between Izayoi Sakamaki and Kasukabe Yō continued disregarding the end of the Game, and after fighting for seven days and nights, Yō's spirit level got used up and Izayoi emerged as the winner for the time being.

And just like that, she became the leader of the Great Alliance with 3 legendary blunders: losing her debut match after becoming the leader, losing in a personal struggle, and failing her mic speech. After the end of the battle, she continued to shed tears:

"I-I will definitely win next time.....! N-nNext time I'll absolutely win.....!!!"

Until now, she remembers how much she cried back then.

Despite winning, Kudō Asuka was acting somewhat absentmindedly for the next few days.

But one day, she abruptly got dressed and declared:

"I'm going to meet Queen. I think I have to meet her at least once if I want to search for comrades and become stronger. And after that, I intend to investigate Emperor Antoku."

Leaving these words behind, she dashed and went on a journey.

"Cleaning up after yourself"- words that had definitely came from her mouth. Even if she would return someday, she would first make an independent Community, so the things she had to do were numerous, to the point that it’s enviable.

——As for Sakamaki Izayoi.

He didn't particularity say his goodbyes to anyone.

Taking just a bag as luggage, he decided to go fishing on a shore of some river unknown.

Since he had a place to return to, exaggerated farewells were unnecessary. Setting off for an aimless journey, he would come back aimlessly as well. He just wanted to live that way for a short while.

At any rate, Little Garden is vast. Absurdly vast.

Before aiming above recklessly, he first decided to travel around the world. If there would be hardships along the way, then they would become fame, achievements and someday, they would become a guide towards moving up, maybe. Well, okay. Would it be bad to take

a few detours after getting lost on the way?

".....So, are you going to fish in this river, Izayoi-san?"

——Suddenly, the fishing rod stopped shaking.

Getting a little surprised, he looked back and saw two familiar faces.

"Kuro Usagi and..... Gry? What's with this unexpected search group."

『What are you saying? Isn't this a given? With Kuro Usagi-dono's ears and my wings, we can find you no matter where you are』

"Yes! We are the「No Name」search group!"

Usaa! - Kuro Usagi's usamimi perked up.

Izayoi's smile grew wider. It seems they didn't come here just to search for him. Looking at them closely, they were packed with enough stuff for a journey. And Kuro Usagi's usual bunny skirt has also changed to casual clothing that's easy to move in.

"It seems both of you are heavily equipped. With this, we'll surely be having a long trip. .....But, are you two sure about this? If a Demon Lord attacks the community all of a sudden, wouldn't it be greatly disadvantageous if Kuro Usagi wasn't there?"

"That should be our line. Izayoi-san, surely you don't think that you wouldn't fight at least one Demon Lord on this journey, right?"

"..... Ah, of course not."

"Right? Then, take us with you at least. Travelling with legs could be tiring, so these wings are already yours. Use them as you want.』

"YES! Kuro Usagi also wants to repay you for everything!"

Getting in high spirits, Kuro Usagi raised her usamimi. If at that moment, she said something like:「Izayoi-san, I want to be together with you!」, then perhaps she could have become the main heroine, But regretfully, she's a rabbit.

Izayoi also didn't try to stop them anymore.

Traveling together doesn't sound bad. They will journey together anywhere in Little Garden.

"For the time being, we should secure a meal, but.....this river is no good. Let's go to the nearest town. I'll be relying on you, partner."

『Yes. Likewise, my rider!』

"D-Don't forget about Kuro Usagi!"

Yahaha - he grasped the reins while laughing. Confirming that Kuro Usagi had properly saddled up behind Izayoi, the Gryphon let out a neigh befitting of a beast king and soared up in the sky.

As he firmly traveled through the sky, he confirmed that the wind was favorable and called out to them:

『Strong winds are blowing! I'll be flying non-stop, so hold on!』

"Go ahead and fly all you want! If it's now, I'll even accompany you to the ends of the world!"

"Yes! I heard that on the other shore is an unknown shrine! Surely, it must be an amazing place!"

That's great! - saying that at the same time, the three of them continued dashing in the sky.

They gazed at the setting sun from the heavens.

The scene of the heaven and earth becoming symmetrically dyed, truly belonged to this dreamy world. They would surely see this, and perhaps even more beautiful sceneries for many more times.

Without a doubt, their hands would reach till the ends of time, ends of the word and even beyond to another world.

For the legend about these problem children——has only just begun.

Another Prologue

Part 1

———— That day on Golden Week.

Three years had passed since his brother went missing

That was the fifth of May that was too early for rainy season.

Saigou Homura and Ayazato Suzuka sat quietly under the bus stop in the rain.

Sunny day in May would probably change from seasonal indication to idiom, there was no sign of a sunny day at all.

It was originally the period when troubles came in pairs and people get worried often, adding high humidity and high frequency of rain, it was so unbearable.

The central line that took about thirty minutes on bicycle seemed to be unable to handle rain or snow, surrendered once a bad weather occurred. With that the schedule would be delayed, the density of passengers inside the bus would increase, humidity would reach a new height. The hell in present world was talking about this.

...At least, they wanted to bring a good news back.

Things were constantly changing in the world. They really did not want to go back and open the Canaria Foster Home's gate.

Unlike his age, his mental strength was very strong, but this time it was really hopeless.

Saigou Homura sighed, then Suzuka that sat beside him squeezed out an ounce of vitality and laughed.

"...Nihaha. It really ended up like this. Mah, we really can't do anything about money problem! Cheer up, Brother!"

"I know, Sister."

The girl at his side —— Ayazato Suzuka also called Homura the nickname that was decided from time unknown, then looked up at the raining sky.

She should have also suffered a big shock, but it did not show from her appearance. Mental strength was definitely one reason, at the same time she was trying to encourage Homura to cheer up.

—— Today, they attended one of the patrons of the foster home, the funeral of the rich grandpa whom they were on good term with since young.

They felt sadness from the departure of their benefactor that treated them like his own children, but the real problem was during the funeral, a man that seemed like the eldest son's words to them.

"Very sorry, we plan to withdraw our funding for your orphanage", The two that were suddenly thrown such words, was forced out without any chance of rebuttal. It was the only patron that they thought would never withdraw, caused them to receive a big shock. With that the last patron was also lost. They were checkmated.

Canaria foster home, wa no different from disband.

"In this half year, twelve patrons were all annihilated. Three of them faced operational difficulties so it couldn't be helped, but the other patrons' withdrawal were obviously strange. It can only be deemed as someone's conspiracy. Who exactly would try to crush our home?"

"Even if we know it's too late. And there can be countless reasons to attack us. Think about it... The children from Carnaria foster home, everyone was special."

Her tone was slightly lowered. Indeed, it might be because of this.

Especially with the growth of age recently, the children had changed from special to strange. However, Homura did not know what that meant.

"Since even Mikado-san cannot investigate. If there is anyone else that can help us ——"

At that, Suzuka vigorously held her mouth.

"...Sorry. Even if I mention the name of that person who is no longer here won't help."

"Don't worry. If he is contactable, I would have contacted him long ago."

Silent atmosphere followed after. Suzuka could not endure the awkwardness, looked up at the sky.

"...It's always raining recently. I haven't greeted the Sun or Moon for a long time."

"It's not even the rainy season yet. It was said to be abnormal weather but nothing much happened."

"That's right. Will sunny day arrive?"

"Who knows...Rather than that, the bus is here."

Kada kada, the bus that was late for thirty minutes arrived at the bus stop. Once the bus door opened, the dense passengers and humidity from rain immediately made the air stuffy.

"—— Alright. First let's cheer up, do what we can do right now!"

Pat 2

—— Canaria foster home·Front gate.

Although they were almost suffocated in the bus, the two finally returned to Canaria foster home. They were also drenched along the way by the heavy rain. Suzuka immediately took off her coat and yelled when she got back.

“Uwah. Super drenched! Unbelievable! Bath! Bath! Is the hot water ready!? Also Brother, can I go first!?”

“OK, understood. The female body is easier to get cold, Sister.”

Homura casually took off his shoes while replying earnestly. Then Suzuka suddenly stopped.

“...Somehow. The Homura recently, felt a bit like Iza-nii.”

“Aheh?”

“Nothing. I’m going in first!”

Ayazato Suzuka dashed into the bathroom. After Homura took off his shoes, he discovered the shoes of a stranger.

(...? One of them belonged to Mikado jii-san. What about the other pair?)

He tilted his head, and headed to the reception room. It was not strange for Mikado to visit, but bringing someone else was rare.

Saigou Homura walked towards the reception room with curiosity, after seeing the middle-aged man leaning on the sofa —— Mikado Tokuteru, spoke dumbfoundedly.

“Oi, Mikado jii-san. Didn’t I say before not to smoke here?”

“Un? Oh oh, sorry. I accidentally took a puff thinking nobody is around.”

Mikado Tokuteru extinguished the cigarette light while showing a friendly smile. Homura took the chance to snatch away the recently opened cigarette packet from his chest pocket.

“Areh, oi oi, I only smoked one oi.”

“Shut up. I will return you when you go back, it will be in my custody for now. Breaking the rules is bound for punishment.”

“So, so inflexible...But, you returned earlier than I thought. They plan to withdraw after all?”

He suddenly ceased his smile, and pointed out the core problem.

That man...After Izayoi and Lawyer went missing, Mikado Tokuteru appeared in the foster home with no successor, named himself as the hired manager. At first it was very suspicious, but the prepared documents were not suspicious at all, and he also knew the secret of Canaria foster home, so they let him try first.

He claimed to be the freelancer that traveled the world, and in this few years, he could understand that he was an excellent mercenary. He would become a famous person if not for being a womanizer or alcoholic.

“It’s basically the same as I thought. No intention of listening to us at all. Then no matter what weapon we have it would be useless...Even if we showed him the account book Mikado-san helped investigate, it is totally useless.”

Understanding the meaning in that last sentence. Mikado Tokuteru frowned, and held his chin.

“Like that huh...If that secret account book cannot settle this, then it must be related to some heavy weights. Sorry, I couldn’t help.”

It’s fine, don’t mind it. Although reluctant, it was our complete defeat. Canara foster home...can only be disbanded.”

For an instant, he showed a distant look.

But Mikado Tokuteru grabbed his shoulder with a strong force.

“No, it’s not determined yet. Today I come to talk about this. It’s up to you now.”

“...Eh?”

“Alright, Kudou’s ojou-sama should have finished her tour. Prepare yourself now!”

Mikado Tokuteru slapped Homura’s back, telling him to arrange his attire. Although Homura was confused about the situation, that confusion dispersed immediately after seeing the person walking down the stairs.

The moment she walked down the stairs, she naturally made an eye contact with Homura.

“...This one, is professor Saigou’s…?”

“That’s right, Kudou Ayato-sama. Ok, greet her, Homura.”

Mikado Tokuteru urged Homura to make his self-introduction. However, when Saigou Homura saw that girl, he could not help but be surprised.

The girl that was introduced —— Kudou Ayato’s blond hair, rather than saying the shine of gold, it was like the brilliance of the sun, or beautiful like the golden wheat field.

The slightly younger facial features were prim and proper, with a feeling of a Japanese

mixed blood.

Judging from her height, she seemed to be similar in age, but her unique atmosphere made people feel that she was a high class lady.

Although Homura’s mi

needed to negotiate or accept unconditionally, he could not continue without knowing.

Kudou Ayato hesitated for a moment, after looking at Mikado Tokuteru, she took out a small bottle.

“This is?”

“The latest model of perpetual nano machine’s completed sample.”

In an instant, Homura received a great impact. He knew that his father’s expertise was energy development, but he did not expect this kind of thing to show up.

Just nanotechnology alone was already super technology, to even include perpetuity, even super technology should also have a limit.

“Wait, wait a moment! Ah, no, please wait. Since there is a finished product, why not mass produce it?”

“Of course, we let the development department tried countless times. No matter how many times we try, it was unsuccessful. This is four generations more advanced than our current nanotechnology, regardless of who we were forced to give up. It seems that your father is the real genius.”

She praised his father with her monotone. But the main topic was not that.

“Like I said just now, regardless of how advanced the technology we have, even if we have the finished product, without the design blueprint we can’t do anything. But after Professor Saigou passed away, research data was stolen by someone, the clue also stopped there. Just when I was disheartened and thought that it couldn’t be realized....Mikado-san brought me a ray of hope. That is Saigou Homura. Your ability.”

“!?”

Up to here, Homura finally understood the reason.

In an instant, he threw a furious stare at Mikado Tokuteru.

“...What did you say? About our secret.”

“Sorry, there is no other choice. At least now only Ojou-sama knows.”

“Yes. This is also the reason I did not bring any servants. I heard that Canaria foster home gathered boys and girls with supernatural ability. Homura-san’s「Thousand Magics(Proto Idea)」was exactly the power born for the sake of inheriting your father’s research. If you can lend us your power, we will generously fund the orphanage.”

In her dark green iris and quiet voice, carried a passionate feeling as she spoke. But even Homura could also not easily recreate the nanomachine. Just disassembling alone would require specialized facility and decades of years.

Which also meant —— She, wanted to buy Homura's life.

The price would be the operational expense of this Canaria foster home. Research fee and other would be completely covered by her.

Is this worth your life, please decide now. This was her meaning.

(...Seriously, the things Mikado jii-san brought were never normal.)

Although very troubled, the boys and girls here were all those that nobody adopted. Which also meant if they lost the foster home, these children would be homeless.

Then the answer was only one from the start.

"Only one thing, I hope you can agree."

"Please name it?"

"If this research completed, it would create a world revolution. Based on the usage, it could change the situation the world should be in...Although I can't remember my father, I am sure he wouldn't want it to be used that way. If you can agree to that ——"

Homura stood up, and extended his right hand to her.

"—— My life, will be sold to you. Ayato-sama."

"Of course. I will buy it with a high price."

They held each other's small hand.

After letting go, Homura showed a tired look, sank into the sofa.

"..Haha, great. Damn it, I am relieved you bastard! Although I'm reluctant, but I will still thank you! Thanks, Mikado jii-san! Thank you very much!"

"Hahaha, at least call me Mikado-san you brat. Alright, call the others here. We need to introduce Ojou-sama to them."

I know already, Homura stood up after responding. From that carefree steps, it could be seen that he was still a child.

Unbearingly watching his depart, the two sighed. Following that, the atmosphere between the two suddenly changed. Ayato and Mikado changed into warrior expression, started to discuss.

"「Saigou[1]」's「Homura[2]」huh? As long as one was from Little Garden, no matter who would feel tremor from this name, Indra."

"That's right, Queen's knight. Or should I call you Faceless?"

“...That name, I would be embarrassed to be called that in the Outer World.”

“No no, there is something more embarrassing than this. It was such a touching farewell, in the end you retained your persona after reincarnation, and even enjoyed your new life.”

“I, I am also confused! The master that came to visit me also said, it was really an astronomical miracle...Mah, at least I don’t have the plans to return to Little Garden.”

Her face slightly blushed, quietly looked away.

Resolving her own matters by herself, it would seem to be impossible. She only hoped not to be found by Asuka.

“However, all the surface problems have been resolved...But there might be one matter that is uncertain.”

“...You mean, he may become the new「Last Embryo」?”

“How is that possible. I won’t let it happen. For that —— War God(I) have descended on earth.”

Just for a instant, Indra’s spirit level bloated up.

Just at that moment, sun ray peeked through the rain cloud.

No matter how long the storm continued, sunny day would eventually arrive.

Just then, they heard some panicking footsteps. The two contained that atmosphere just now, it would be alright to just receive the welcome of Canaria foster home right now.

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1 Karma of the West. Although it’s read as Saigou(西業), the Kanji is different from Homura’s last name 西郷.↩

2 Flame.↩

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Afterwords

Afterwords

Thank you for for taking in hands this modern comedy another world heart-warming fantasy『Problem Children Are Coming From Another World, Aren't They?』.

And also a big thank you to everyone who helped the release of this volume.

Thinking about it, this series has been ongoing for four years already.

I never thought that I would continue writing until hitting the age of 30!

I wasn't able to do everything I wanted to do, but even so, I think that safely arriving at the conclusion of the first part is all thanks to the readers.

Looking back, the days when I wrestled with the work groaning, "Not like this..." or "This isn't right..." were actually pretty fun. I'm feeling kinda moved. ...Ah, but, just between you and me, I have to admit that there were parts here and there that made me think I could've made them more interesting but you know? It was just a problem of time, and I didn't have enough time so I cut out all that stuff, and actually I cut out so much that you could make three whole series just from the length of everything that had been cut out, and whoa it was so much that I thought writing all this was healthy but, nonono, it's just good practice as a professional in this industry to do the best you can with the time you're given, and it's not like they'd just give some newcomer writer unlimited pages as well as time.

Mondaiji itself was basically created from the concept of being 'every idea that Tatsunoko had on hand', so I guess in the end, I did it the right way, I thought. But well, with all that included, pushing past all sorts of problems and joyous moments, it's been a hectic four years. I discarded the dry life that I had before becoming a writer, but I began thinking that the density of life can raise immeasurably. In the end, I somehow managed to do something that was impossible and got my debut novel an anime and a manga adaptation. Yes, I have no regrets.

.....Somehow, I talk with sadness behind it.

The second part of the series still has a long way to go!

I'm not sure how many years will the conclusion take, but fortunately, there are still indications about continuing, that's why it's very likely that I will continue writing it along with side stories. I honestly want to write several volumes about things like, Jack the Ripper London chapter, Heian Monster Story chapter, Near Future chapter, Seven Great Sages chapter, Dystopia chapter and such.

Well now, there's a very important piece of news for the readers of the Mondaiji series.

The second part, which is surely on everyone's minds, is steadily advancing. Please be at ease. I won't make you wait. I think the specific date of release is written on the wrapper of the book.

And now, the serious announcement! Information regarding the second part!

The legend about the new「Problem Children」is beginning――

Izayoi: But I won’t hand over the role of the main protagonist

Tatsunoko Tarou

Illustrator: Momoko

2015/6/1 Series Start!

Last Embryo 1 - Return of the Problem Children!(Temporary) -

Mondaiji series second part, start.

The arc is called "Last Embryo"

The title and cover changed a little, but the contents inside haven't changed. Please be at ease. It's the usual Mondaiji series. I wanted to make a nice announcement about it, but

sadly, I heard that it rarely ever happens in Sneaker Bunko.

Also, everyone who read this volume should have already realized but, from the second part, Momoco-sensei will become the new illustrator!

Amano Yuu Sensei, many thanks for these past four years!

I requested a person because I heard that he could draw cute bunny girls, to actually join into this grandiose world, thank you very much!

When things calm down for us, I would like to go for a drink together with my old editor.

Well then Momoco-sensei, looking forward to working with you from now on. I think there will be many more bath scenes in the future, so I hope we get along.

Also to every reader, please look forward to the Mondaiji series from now on!

Tatsunoko Tarou

Tatsunoko-sensei, good work finishing the first part of the series!

The Problem Children series was the first work for me as an illustrator, so I am truly thankful for it to have appeared before my eyes like a giant wave.

From second part onward, I pass the baton to the current illustrator, Momoco-san, show us even more excitements than before.

And now to every reader and every staff member: thank you very much for the support.

I hope we meet again somewhere!

Amano Yuu